MEHALED AND SEDLI;

OR,

THE HISTORY

OF

A DRUSE FAMILY.

VOL. II.

Mehaled and Sedli;

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THE HISTORY

OF A

DRUSE FAMILY:

WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF THE DRUSES,

AN ANCIENT PEOPLE OF SYRIA.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY THE

BARON DE DALBERG,

BROTHER OF THE GRAND DUKE OF FRANKFORT.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR GALE AND FENNER, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1816.

Dennett, Printer, Leather Lane, Holborn.



MEHALED AND SEDLI.



CHAPTER XXX.

Liata.

"One day, as, seated by the side of the sea, I ran over, in my memory, the incidents of my youth, and gave thanks to that Providence, which, up to that moment, had guided me with paternal tenderness, a wave, blown upon the shore, covered the little book of my mother with water. I had difficulty in preventing it from being washed away. It was entirely wetted; but, I placed it in the sun, and it was

soon dry. On taking it up again, I perceived, that a white leaf, which lay over the inside of the covering, could be easily detached, leaving, on the other side, some writing which I knew to be that of my mother. Scarcely had I lifted up the leaf when I saw, on the part which it had covered, the continuation of the passage which had always hitherto remained an indescribable enigma. I now read the whole together:—"I have found, at length, a book which alone contains the truth for which I have so long sought in vain; the holy doctrine which leads to felicity, and which gives both precept and example. It is——"

The Hermit, fetching the little book which was in a press in his cell,

showed the passage to the Druses, and added, "Here, as you see, are the words:—'the Gospel of Jesus Christ.' Beneath is delineated a cross of gold, seated upon clouds, and round it this inscription: 'Liata acknowledges in this cross her salvation and redemption.'

"My surprise, my astonishment was still less the joy which this discovery occasioned me. I shed tears of religious rapture; I printed a thousand kisses on this beloved writing; for, I could no longer doubt that my mother had been a Christian.

I felt myself doubly happy to be united by this new tie to her whom I had so early lost; I thought her spirit hovered around me, and it seemed as if

an angelic voice whispered in my ear, 'Her prayers have obtained from heaven thy conversion.' My mother had been of the number of the servants of Jesus Christ; that appeared to me to be plain; but all the rest was a mystery in which I lost myself, when I attempted to search further.

"I hastened toward the convent, to communicate this singular discovery to Ambrosios. He was not less surprized than myself. Presently, having asked me some questions concerning my family, and the place where my parents dwelt, he recollected, upon referring again to my mother's name, that once, at Patna, he baptized the wife of a Parsee, who called herself Liata. He produced his register of baptisms; and,

in it, I read the beloved name of my mother, accompanied by that of Mary Ann, which she had received on embracing the faith.

Ambrosios afterward related, that during his stay at Patna, every time he preached at religious festivals or other religious solemnities, he had distinguished, among his auditors, a woman of elegant figure, veiled after the manner of the Parsees, who constantly stood by his side. One day, when he had been hearing confessions, she approached him, and informed him of her desire to become a Christian. "My discourses," added Ambrosio, "had made so much the more deep impression upon her heart, as she was already acquainted with the Gospel through a Persian translation,

which was among her father's books; but she was obliged to make profession of the faith in secret, because her husband was so zealous a follower of the religion of Zoroaster, that all her attempts to lead him to the doctrine of Jesus Christ had hitherto been useless. She had not, however, lost all hope; but she conjured me to hasten her admission into the bosom of the faithful, because she felt a sensible decay of strength, and doubted whether she had long to live. I yielded," continued Ambrosios, "to her pious desires; and, after having instructed her in the principal points of religion, I gave her baptism. A little time after, I quitted Patna, to pursue the work of salvation in the

neighbouring countries; and, on my return, about a year after, having inquired for Liata, I learned that she had given birth to a son, and, a short time after, had died.

"During this recital, I wept abundantly, and the good Ambrosios endeavoured to console my affliction in these words:

"'Console thyself, my friend; Liata is happier, in the abode of the blessed, than if she still walked in the valley of suffering. Doubt not that her glorified spirit prays for thee, and that thou will behold her again, when death shall release thee.'

"But explain, said I, how it is, that this secret has been so long concealed from me, and how I am to account for this white leaf of the little

book, interposed by the hand of a stranger?

" 'This is what I imagine,' returned Ambrosios. 'Thy mother, seeing the constant aversion of thy father from Christianity, carefully preserved this jewel till the moment of her death. Soon after her eyes were closed, the book was given, sealed up, to thy father, in order that thou shouldst have it when thou grewest up. But thou knowest that the Parsees, at the hour of their death, are surrounded by Mobeds, attentive, above all things, that, the ceremonies of the Sag-lid (30), of the first importance in their opinion, should be carefully performed. As the Mobeds are declared enemies of the Christians, it is probable these jealous priests, unable to

destroy thy mother's book, endeavoured to conceal from the eyes of the Parsees this avowal of Liata, so little flattering to their religion.'

CHAP. XXXI.



Africa.

"MEANTIME, the day fixed for our departure insensibly approached. After providing what was indispensable for our journey, we set out. Lent was nearly at an end, and we hastened, in consequence, to arrive at Jerusalem in time to celebrate, in that city, the festival of Easter. The fathers of the mission received us with kindness.

"Though the holy city is at this day only a paltry village, and scarcely betrays the smallest vestige of its ancient grandeur, I did not touch its

sacred soil but with inexpressible veneration. I visited, with the utmost self-recollection, the mounts Moria, Salem, Sion and Olives; and Golgotha, which the death of the Saviour has rendered to Christians the most holy spot of all the earth.

"An innumerable crowd of pilgrims of all countries were assembled in that city; and, how moving was the sight, to behold this pious multitude celebrating the feast of the Resurrection, at the tomb of Jesus Christ!

"After visiting Bethlehem, and the most remarkable places round the sacred city, we proceeded to Cairo (31), whence we saw the pyramids of Ghizeh, which, with the ruins adjacent, point out to the traveller where was formerly the city of Memphis. After this, we

embarked on board a canja, a sort of vessel in use in that country, and ascended into Upper Egypt.

" The banks of the Nile, little varied, and shaded, only here and there, with palms and date-trees, rarely presented inviting prospects. Sometimes, the eye discovered a mean village—hordes of Arabs, encamped under tents, and pyramids—and deserted ruins.

" The higher we ascend the river, the more the chain of barren mountains approach or retire from its banks, the landscape becomes picturesque ; and the more the majestic remains of Egyptian antiquity become frequent. Denderah, with its temples and magnificent porticos ; the villages of El Gurni, Esneh, and Edfu ; and,

then, the superb ruins and the tombs of ancient Thebes, struck me with admiration. The symbolical statues of the gods, which reared before my eyes their gigantic forms; the temples, the granite porticos, ornamented with hieroglyphics and symbolical figures, all appeared prodigious. What attractions these objects would formerly have had for me! How they would have excited my curiosity to explain them! But, now, they appeared to be but a dead alphabet. The figures presented themselves to me only as the symbols of a worship long since extinguished; ruins of an idolatry similar to the worship of Brahma, though under a different form. I had now chosen an occupation more noble, an aim more elevated; that of teaching

the truths of the Gospel, and spreading them among the heathen.

"We arrived, at length, at Syene, called by the Arabs, Assuan; and thence we visited the Cataracts of the Nile, in the neighbourhood of that city. As these Cataracts prevent the further navigation of the river, we joined a caravan. A little beyond Syene, when we leave the high mountains which surround that place, begins the Great Desert of Nubia, where, in the early ages of Christianity, those pious persons, who lived but for heaven and for devout meditation, gave to the world the example of rare virtues and sacrifices. We often read, on the spot itself which was their theatre, the recital of their principal actions; and this employment strengthened us, in-

structed us, and rendered less sensible the fatigues of our dangerous journey.

"To the endless discomfort which a traveller must sustain in this wild region, is added his fears of the ferocious Ethiopians, who, in murderous bands, suddenly descend from the mountains, and often destroy entire caravans. The Samun (32), or south-wind is not less destructive. It lifts whirlwinds of burning sand into the air, and sometimes lets fall, in the form of rain, clouds of fine dust; while at others, it raises columns of red sand, which spread themselves over the plain with a frightful impetuosity, destroying every thing, and inflicting inevitable death upon the traveller who does not instantly throw

himself upon his face upon the ground.

"As it is dangerous for Christians to pass for such, in accompanying the caravans, I represented myself as a Persian physician. My companion had bought at Cairo, of an European traveller, among other merchandize esteemed in Africa, a magic-lanthorn, with painted glasses, which he showed to the curious; and, in a short time, we obtained a friendly welcome from the rude people with whom we were travelling. At the Coptic convents, to which we resorted whenever the caravans took a few days repose, we received the fullest information concerning the country we were to go through.

"Providence enabled us to sur-

mount all our difficulties and dangers, and we arrived in health and spirits at a village in the kingdom of Sennaar, paltry at present, but which attracts attention, because it may be deduced, from the ruins which it contains, from tradition, and from the uniform testimony of ancient writers, that it occupies the site of the ancient Meroe, the capital of a kingdom founded by the pastoral nations of Ethiopia. It was at Meroe that hieroglyphical writing was invented. Obelisks and temples ornamented this city before they were heard of in Lower Egypt; and it possessed in the earliest times, a flourishing trade. When we passed through the little state of Sennaar, the sovereign authority was in the hands of a female.

"At this place we separated from the caravan, which was proceeding to Darfur, and other countries in the interior of Africa. The princess, to whom we caused ourselves to be presented as Nazarenes (the name given to Christians in that country), granted us leave to travel freely in her territory. Thence, we went among the Nubas, a tribe of a mild character, and Arabian origin, and by whom we were received with friendship. We lived among them as brothers, and gained their confidence, because, not only we preached to them the Gospel, but taught them also to improve the cultivation of the fields, to take better care of the crops they gathered, and to live more commodiously within their houses. Hence, during our short

stay with this people, we converted many souls to the faith.

" From the Nubas, we went to Gondar, the capital of Abyssinia. King Joas, who was then alive, called us into his presence; and, when we had presented our letters, gave us permission to convert to Christianity his idolatrous subjects. *We were sent into the southern part of his dominions, toward the people known to antiquity by the name of Troglodytes, or dwellers in caves, and who still lead their former kind of life, in the high mountains of Abyssinia. It is likewise in this country that live the pastoral and wandering, and also warlike tribes of the Agows, Amharas, Gallas, Dobenas, and Falashas, who, at the periodical rainy seasons, re-

move into the valleys of Atbor, and to the banks of the Mareb.

"We lived several years among these tribes. We experienced many difficulties, to which we patiently submitted; fearing no danger that threatened us for spreading the faith, and, by its means, benevolence and purity of manners. God rewarded our labour by the conversion of a great number of souls.

"I found among the Falasha Jews, beside the Bible, the books of Enoch and Seth, of which my Persian tutor had spoken to me so often. But these two works, after an attentive examination, appeared to me to be only trivial writings, the work of a very recent period, and any thing but instructive.

CHAP. XXXII.



End of the Hermit's Story.

"After having long fulfilled, in Abyssinia, the functions of a missionary, Ambrosios obtained his recal, and received a commission to visit, on his return, the religious communities of Georgia and Armenia. We embarked at Massuah, the nearest port on the Red Sea, and set sail for Suez, whence we directed our steps toward Jerusalem, and thence revisited our brothers in the country of the Maronites. Afterward, we passed through Haleb and Diarbekr, to reach

Armenia; and, by the way of Teflis, gained this spot, the principal seat of the Church of Georgia.

"The design of Ambrosios was, hence to visit Anarghia, a neighbouring port of Mingrelia; to traverse the Black Sea, as far as Constantinople; and to embark, at that capital of the Ottoman empire, for Italy. I also intended to accompany him. But age, the feebleness of his body, and the fatigues of a long mission, had undermined the health of the good Ambrosios. I had already observed in him, at our return to our monastery, symptoms of a disorder which speedily declared itself, and attacked him with so much violence, that in spite of the most assiduous cares, he died in a few days.

" Calm and tranquil, with his sole thought directed toward his heavenly country, that pious man quitted with joy this terrestrial world; his last words were exhortations that I should not forsake the way of faith and truth which he had taught me. Plunged in tears, and with a bursting heart, I closed the eyes of my faithful companion.

" The death of that servant of God caused me to desist from my purpose of visiting Rome. Old age, likewise, began to weigh heavy on my head; and I felt myself totally incapable of those functions which require the vigour and vivacity of youth. The variety of trials which I had undergone, and the numerous changes which my lot had received, had inspired me

with so much disgust at the inconstant and fleeting life of this world, and so ardent a desire to enjoy repose, that I blessed Heaven for having conducted me, after so many storms, into the bosom of solitude, where I might consecrate the remainder of my days to religious meditation.

"I wrote letters to Rome, and gave an account of our mission to the Father of the Faithful, soliciting leave to remain at this monastery. It was granted me; and the superiors here also consented that I should inhabit one of the loftiest hermitages, instead of living in the interior of the convent. The former agreed better with my accustomed way of life; and enabled me to be more useful, in gathering, on the sides of the mountain,

medicinal plants, and preparing them for use, than by giving myself to any other occupation.

"From that epoch, I have enjoyed, at this place, an unmingled happiness, which is acquired only through piety, and the performance of the duties of humanity. Jesus Christ, who fulfilled them in the most exemplary manner, recommends them as the essence of his doctrine. Oh, my friends!" continued he, "it is only in the exercise of holy charity, in resignation and benevolence, that exists the source of heavenly pleasures. These have overthrown the gods of antiquity; the reign of fable is at an end; the law of the true eternal light is manifested, and is spread over the whole world." (33)

Here, the old man finished his recital. He had uttered the concluding words with so much warmth, that his countenance beamed with fire; his features, lit up by the beams of the setting sun, threw forth lightnings, as if a celestial light enveloped him.

The good Hermit left his guests an instant, while he watered the fragrant flowers of his garden. The Druses remained on the grass, plunged in serious reflections. When the old man returned, the Sheik interrupted the long silence in these words:

"How, generous friend, can I suitably thank thee for thy recital? Never did the religion of Christ discover itself to me in a form so attractive. If thou wilt communicate to me the book of *the new alliance*,

which I never saw, I will read it willingly. If the same faith does not unite us, at least the Druses are inclined to the Christians, and resemble each other in this wish: 'May a single religion one day unite all mankind!' It is for this reason that we are called Unitarians."

The Hermit led his guests into his little cell; and, after opening a press, showed them several books which, together with his manuscripts, Ambrosios had bequeathed him as a mark of his remembrance.

He put into the hands of the Sheik a copy of the Gospels, translated by missionaries, by order of Akbar, that wise Emperor of the Moguls.

CHAP. XXXIII.

The Storm.

WHEN the Druses left the cell of the Hermit, taking leave of their venerable host, the evening had spread its shades upon the earth. Looking toward their dwelling, they saw stormy clouds, which had long been gathering in the atmosphere, suddenly collect together, and cover all the plain. The darkness was interrupted by flashes of lightning, which crossed each other in different directions. The storm approached nearer to the mountains, and surrrounded their feet, but could not

reach their summit. They heard the rolling of the thunder, the growling of the tempest, and the horrible clatter of the devastating hail; but, around those who were on the mountain, all was calm. The serene and azure sky was troubled by no cloud; and, from the top of the rocks, they beheld the shining radiance of the setting sun, falling in gold upon the distant valleys.

"The calm which we enjoy," said the Sheik, "while around us the elements are in commotion, is an image of the mind of the sage, which, undisturbed by the passions, and like the cedar of Lebanon, defies the tempest."

"Say, rather," returned the Hermit, "like the soul of the Christian, which, not relying on its own strength,

before God, who created and preserves it, humbles itself in his presence, and renders him continual thanks. The calm which these heights assume to us is ravishing; and, as the body feels more light in the pure air which surrounds it, so, also, the soul draws nearer to heaven, by representing to itself the joys which await it in a more elevated abode. But, so long as he carries his earthly covering, the pilgrim in this world cannot withdraw himself from the duties of humanity. He must be useful to his brethren; he must return them love for love; he must be a man among men; and I will discharge this duty till my last sigh. Inhabitants of this solitary mountain, of what use to the world should we be, if, shut up in cells and

oratories, we consecrated our days and nights only to pious meditation? That friend of mankind judged wisely, who assigned us these rocks for our retreat. It is our duty to cultivate these deserts, and, in times of adversity or danger, to be useful to the surrounding country. Hence, he has enjoined upon us, that after storms and tempests, we descend into the plain, and carry with us such succour as the suffering may need. I part from you with regret; but, as the clouds are dispersing, and as the approach of night forbids you to remain longer, permit me to accompany you as far as your dwelling."

The good Hermit lit a lamp, unfastened a watchful dog which was chained near his cell, and set out in front of his guests.

The sky was covered with clouds, except here and there, where a few stars were seen to glisten. The moon shed only a pale light on the high rocks, which, reflecting, at the same time, the light of the Hermit's lamp, rose like grey clouds into the heavens. The storm had ceased; but the wind was still heard, whistling mournfully among the branches of the firs, and sweeping the heath of the waste.

The old man led his companions along the side of the mountain, by a path peculiarly safe, and known only to the inhabitants of the higher parts. He carefully avoided the low places; because, after violent storms, the waters of the torrents collect together, carry away the bridges, and leave no vestige of a road.

The night became intensely dark, and thick fogs covered the valley. Here and there lights were seen to shine, which often went out, and then, being lit again, glided from one place to another, till they reached a marsh, where they buried themselves in the earth.

"These ignis-fatuuses," said the Hermit, "regarded by the people as evil spirits, are common in this district. They have led more than one traveller to his destruction."

From time to time, he sounded a bell which he carried with him, in order to inform persons gone astray, that they might hope for relief.

The party had not proceeded far, when they heard the sound of several voices, which grew nearer as they ad-

vanced. The vigilant dog, discovering the traces of the travellers, quickly led them to his master. What was the surprize of the Sheik, at discovering, in the midst of the wilds, and in a night so stormy, two of his sons!

"What accident, my dear children," cried he, "has brought thee out, in a night like this?"

"Father," replied the eldest, "an event which I scarcely dare relate. This evening, when the business of the family was finished, Sedli resolved on coming to meet thee and Mehaled. Already, thick clouds were gathered round us, and every one advised her of the danger of an approaching storm. But, whether she believed the danger more distant, or whether her lively desire to meet you imperiously

drew her on, nothing could alter her purpose. Alone, taking her son in her hand, she took the road to the mountains. We were all at work in the field when the storm surprized us. It was so sudden, that there was no time for escape. We hastened to the house; but, what was our alarm, when our mother, racked by her apprehensions, told us that Sedli, who went out a little before the beginning of the storm, was not returned! We followed the path she took; we divided ourselves and went on different roads; we carefully examined the heights and valleys. After many searches, I found Sedli extended on the turf of a hillock, holding her child in a strong embrace, and covering his head with her own. So large

a heap of hail-stones had fallen upon her, that she could scarcely be distinguished. I released her as soon as possible from the overwhelming weight. I spoke to her, but she gave me no answer. The child, warmed by the body of his mother, was still sensible, though terrified with fear; but Sedli, wounded by the violence of the fall of hail, was without voice or breathing. While I staunched her blood, my brothers joined me. We carried the mother and child to the house. After placing Sedli on a bed, wrapping her in warm blankets, and endeavouring to resuscitate her by animating balsams, she suddenly recovered from her fainting, asked whether her child was still alive, enquired for you, and then fell again into a state

of insensibility. In vain have we u ed our efforts to recover her. My brothers have staid behind to take care of her, and assist their mother, who, wringing her hands, and weeping, does not quit the side of Sedli. I hastened this way, to beg the good Hermit, of whose skill in healing the sick Mehaled has informed us, to fly to the aid of our sister."

CHAP. XXXIV.



The Physician.

"How rejoiced I am," said the old man, "that you met me here. Let us lose no time." Instantly, he doubled his pace, accompanied by Mehaled, who, absorbed in an agony of grief, had scarcely heard the latter part of the recital.

The imminence of the danger, and the anxiety to save Sedli, renewed in the sinews of the Hermit the vigour of youth, and gave him wings to aid his steps. The sons of the Sheik walked with their father, fatigued with

the length of their search, and with their return, more painful still. All, however, speedily reached the house.

With hearts full of agony, the father and brothers approached the sick bed. Mehaled and the Hermit kept close to the side of Sedli; while her mother and the rest of the family watched in anxious suspense. Sedli's child, terrified by the situation of his mother, ran to his grandfather, and led him to the bed in tears. All fixed their eyes on the Hermit, and awaited his decision; while the latter, engaged in giving succour to Sedli, said little. Meanwhile, his thoughtful air, and uneasy countenance, bespoke but too clearly the perilous condition of his patient.

In this moment, which was to de-

cide whether death should ravish her from her husband, her parents, and her friends, was seen how much she was beloved, and how well she deserved to be so. Not only her husband, her parents, her brothers, her sisters, and all the house, bathed in tears, surrounded the physician, and conjured him to save one so dear; but the news of the unhappy accident being spread among the neighbours, all, and especially the poor, to whom she had done so much good in secret, hastened into the court of the house.

After several days of continual fever, the strength of youth produced so favourable a crisis, that the patient awoke out of her long sleep. Mehaled, holding on his knees the pledge of their love, was seated, weeping, by

the side of his wife; for, from the moment of his return, he had never left her. She was weak, pale, and changed; nevertheless, she collected her strength, and, extending her hand to these beloved objects, cast on them a look which expressed all her love.

"Why dost thou weep so, my love?" said she, in a gentle voice: "dry thy tears; I am better than thou thinkest. I am supported by the consciousness of having fulfilled the duty of maternal love; and that persuasion lightens my sufferings. Neither are they so violent as they seem."

Nevertheless, she suffered greatly; and the chill she had received in the storm had taken a serious hold on her constitution, threatening a rapid

decline. She perceived it herself, but suffered none about her to suspect it, carefully forcing herself to hide from Mehaled, and the rest who were dear to her, the pain under which she laboured. Her countenance was always serene; and she thanked, by looks full of gratitude, the charitable Basil, the aged friend of her husband.

The remedies administered by the latter produced so salutary an effect, that Sedli quickly recovered, and was restored, in a little time, to her family. The Druses owed the cure to the Hermit, and lavished upon him testimonies of the liveliest and sincerest attachment. He was become their saving genius. All the family considered him as one of its members; and their intimate friendship mutually

united them for ever. When the health of his patient became assured, the Hermit returned to his cell. From time to time he visited his friends on the plain; and his presence never failed to create a little festival among the Druses.

CHAP. XXXV.



The Gospel.

THE Druses also delighted themselves rejoiced in the symptoms of the cure of Sedli, whose strength really seemed to be renewed. The family were transported with her appearance; and she alone was not deceived as to the truth.

Nevertheless, she was sufficiently recovered to watch over the cares of the house, and follow her accustomed manner of life; for, in Georgia, as at Zahlah, and on the banks of the Jordan, she was the soul of the family. Nothing was done without her advice.

The Sheik seldom spoke of the religious conversation which had occurred at the Hermit's cell, and the sublime ideas which the Hermit had given him concerning Christianity. Neither did he seem desirous of studying the copy of the Gospels, which Basil had confided to his care; but it is probable that he read them when alone.

And who knows not the force exercised upon our minds by principles early adopted, and the prejudices which have grown old with ourselves? In reality, the Sheik secretly hesitated between the truths of the Gospel, which he was unable to resist, and the obligation imposed upon him, as Akal, to remain faithful to the doctrine of Hakem, without examining

it, and without comparing it with other religions. He preferred, therefore, to be silent; renounced all depth of research; and avoided joining in any conversation on the subject with those about him.

It was not thus with Mehaled, who, while Sedli was yet scarcely recovered from her first state of weakness, related to her all that the Hermit had said, and showed her the books which the good old man had given him on leaving their house. The youthful couple read with the liveliest attention the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles.

But they indulged in this reading only in the evening, when the Sheik and the rest of the family were not present; for they paid too much re-

spect to the silence of the former, to seek to force him into disputes on subjects of so great importance. The penetrating mind of Sedli went deep into the doctrine of Jesus Christ. Her gentle soul, formed for whatever is beautiful and good, had long harboured in itself a spark of heavenly truth, which needed only to be fanned, to break into a pure and shining flame. Sedli was worthy to become a servant of Jesus Christ; and Mehaled, her other self, shared in all the dispositions of her mind.

With what sentiments of love, of fervour, and of tranquil resignation, were they not inspired by the history of the life of Jesus Christ! How were they not struck with the divine sublimity, and at the same time the

infantine simplicity, the humanity and the tolerating spirit of his doctrine! How, in his words, they felt the dignity of human nature, when, in conforming to the commandments of his Divine Master, man appears as a creature formed in the image of God! How many tears did they not shed over the story of his passion and death! How they were reanimated by his resurrection, and by the consoling promises which he made to his disciples! Sedli was all love for Mary, the celestial Virgin, as was Mehaled for St. John, the beloved disciple of the Lord. But the writings of the Apostles filled them with veneration, and the profoundest awe; their souls were exalted by reading of the acts of these envoys of the Saviour; and

how many times did they not long to be carried back to the first ages of Christianity!

Sedli would willingly have communicated these pious sentiments to her mother; but she dared not open herself to her. Haleb alone shared in their conversations, which he did with an ardour equal to their own.

Basil observed with joy the progress of these ingenuous souls, who, obedient to the voice which called them, and to the light which enlightened them from above, knew themselves for Christians, both from interior impulse, and from conviction. They made their profession of faith to the pious Hermit, and requested to be admitted into the bosom of the church.

The ceremony was performed the

next morning. Mehaled, Sedli, and Haleb were baptized in a neighbouring church, dependant on the monastery. They agreed upon concealing this event for some time, in the hope that a ray of heavenly light would ere long lead their parents and the rest of their family into the way of salvation. In the mean time, they frequented the Christian church, a circumstance which surprised the Sheik so much the less, as, under the religion of the Druses, it is not prohibited to enter Christian churches, and as he himself often attended the service performed in them.

CHAP. XXXVI.

The Letter.

Some time after, Mehaled was sent for by the Czar, upon pressing business. He set out for Teflis, but did not part with Sedli but with the liveliest uneasiness. The health of his beloved wife had sensibly declined for a little time past; and, though she endeavoured to conceal from him what she felt, the symptoms of her decay of strength were become too visible any longer to escape him.

He had communicated his painful suspicions to Basil; and that pious

physician had employed all the resources of his art to keep up the fire which was deadening day by day; but the seeds of destruction had struck the roots too deep. Sedli was continually approaching dissolution; and Mehaled left her with an aching heart.

The Czar received him in the kindest manner. The good prince experienced great satisfaction in learning that he had embraced the Christian faith.

Mehaled rendered the Czar all the service in his power. He lived only for his benefactor, and devoted to him his days and moments; for he regarded it as a principle, that the virtuous man ought voluntarily to sacrifice his private interest to that of the

state, and consecrate his whole existence to it, whenever the public wants require it.

In the mean time, Sedli's desire to see the objects of her affection embrace the Christian faith before she departed from them, was fulfilled.

At the church near the village of the Druses, on every day appointed for divine worship, a sermon was preached by a monk from the convent on the mountain. The turn having fallen on Basil, and the Shiek being apprized of it, the old man, and all his family, with the exception of Sedli, who, on account of the feeble state of health, no longer left the house, attended at the church. The Hermit purposely took his text from the history of the conversion of Cornelius,

the Roman centurion, and commenced his discourse with the words contained in the third verse of the tenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles:—"He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius; and when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, what is it, Lord? and he said unto him, thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter."

The preacher continued to read the simple and moving relation, in what manner St. Peter executed the command of God, by announcing the words of salvation to the centurion whose piety had rendered him accep-

table to his Creator. He spoke, afterward, of the conversion of the great apostle, who, from a furious persecutor of the Christians, became, through the effect of an extraordinary miracle, the most zealous teacher of the faith, and the apostle of the Gentiles. He exhibited St. Paul, filled with his divine vocation, entering the house of Ananias, and laying his hands on the unbeliever, and saying, "The Lord Jesus hath sent me, that thou mayest recover thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost."

The good Hermit pronounced these words with so great energy, and an emotion so deep and inly felt, that the Druses, in their turn, were moved to the centre of their hearts; and the light of the faith, and the desire of

being received into the Christian communion, penetrated their souls. The Hermit finished his discourse by enumerating the advantages which Christianity bestows upon individuals in particular, and on the human race in general; and by demonstrating with succinctness of manner, by substantial arguments, the truth, the sanctity, and the eternal duration of that religion.

The discourse finished, all the Druses flocked round Basil, and asked for immediate baptism. After a short delay, he yielded to their wishes; but, what was then their surprize, at learning, that Sedli, Mehaled, and Haleb, had already embraced Christianity?

Still, Sedli's health grew continually worse. Like a delicate flower, the

succeeding autumn entirely destroyed it. She wrote to Mehaled in these words:

"For a long time past, I have deceived you as to my health. Forgive me, my dear Mehaled! Sedli was afraid of afflicting thee. But my strength forsakes me, and the moment of my dissolution approaches. Shall I part with life, without seeing thee for the last time? We must separate, but death is only a passage to another life; and, to indemnify thee for the absence of Sedli, there remains the child of our love. While thou art forming his young mind to virtue, and when thou speakest to him of his mother, my spirit shall hover over thee. I will pray for thee, and wait for thee in a better world. My weak-

ness prevents my writing more at length. Do not delay, Mehaled, to come and bid a last adieu to thy

"SEDLI."

CHAP. XXXVII.

The Conclusion.

MEHALED flew to his wife. On entering the house, the melancholy looks of the family told him that he had little to hope. With a heart given up to the most cruel agonies, he eagerly inquired of Basil whether his art had yet nothing in store for the restoration of Sedli; but the Hermit replied, lifting up his eyes to heaven, "It remains only for us to resign ourselves to the will of God."

Mehaled approached the bed of Sedli, who, dejected by her extreme

weakness, but with a smile upon her lips, stretched out her hand. Mehaled took it, without speaking, carried it to his lips, and bathed it with a torrent of tears.

Who can paint that scene of deep emotion? who can count the tears that were shed round the dying Sedli? Need we relate minutely all that passed at her last moments; when the despairing family, assembled around her, beheld the inevitable moment approach in which she whom they adored must quit the world? It is enough to say, that she died a Christian. From the moment of her birth, her life had been as pure as an angel's. Death did not seize upon her with violence, but gently untied the bonds which attached her to life. She herself con-

soled and encouraged those around her. She beheld with tranquillity the moment in which she was to cease to live. She had prepared herself for death with the devotion of a saint. All present, holding a lighted taper, recited prayers on their knees, when her angel carried away her soul to the abode of eternal felicity. Her mortal remains, deprived of life, were still beautiful.

None can describe the condition of Mehaled. Sarah, the aged Sheik, all to whom Sedli had been dear, wept around him.

The good Hermit took charge of the obsequies. They were plain, and without pomp, as Sedli had desired. Her relations and the poor were the only attendants; but the females of the

neighbourhood insisted upon carrying the body to the grave.

A place had been prepared in the adjacent church-yard, planted with cypresses and weeping willows. The family, in tears, and wrapped in mourning cloaks, remained at some distance. When the body was deposited in the grave, the priest commenced the prayers; and, after the service of the church was finished, the women sung in chorus this funeral song:

"Let us raise the voice of grief and mourning; let us cover our heads with the crape of mourning, and cry aloud, and cry again, in every land, Woe! woe! woe!

"A fresh and beautiful flower in the garden of life has fallen! Too soon, alas! has it faded.

" The graces of youth adorned our companion: the red of the rose, and the white of the lily, were in her cheeks.

" The smile of Sedli was like the mild radiance of the sun; in form she resembled the young cedar; in motion she was like the antelope.

" But, more beautiful still was her soul. Who can count the tears she has dried away? the friends and poor who have wept around her?

" As the cooling spring steals through the solitary valley; so, secret good spreads itself abroad, without discovering its origin. Her heart lived with others, and her succouring hand incessantly bestowed gifts.

" But, woe! woe! woe! she has perished too soon, the victim of maternal love. To save the child of her

love, she has made the sacrifice of her life.

"Approach with admiration this sacred spot, O ye mothers! Throw flowers upon the tomb of the most generous of women! Sedli sleeps gently the long sleep of death; she rests in the cold grave.

"Weep! weep! the darkness of the grave covers her beauties. We shall lament her for ever! Never more shall we see her among us!

"But look upward with the eyes of the spirit! Her immortal soul hovers in the clouds, where she enjoys eternal felicity."

The song finished, the Sheik drew near the tomb. His family surrounded him, while, in a broken voice, he said:

"Behold us assembled at the place

where those whom death has taken from us repose! . The tears which we shed are the witnesses of our affliction.

"She has left us a beautiful example of purity of life, and of maternal love.

"If, from the abode of eternal rest, thou castest upon us thy looks, O sainted spirit, be, in future, the guardian genius of our lives!

"It is to thee, Mehaled, thou whom she chose for her husband, that she has left the sweet obligation of teaching the child of your loves to resemble her in Christian life and virtue. She has left us too soon, in the flower of her youth. We have confided to the earth the pearl, the ornament of our house!

"The loss is heavy; but we console

ourselves with these words: God has ordained it thus. What he commands is wise; blessed be his holy will! Let us, above all, give thanks to that Providence who caused us to come into this country; for it is here that the promise, 'In the East a new happiness shall be thy lot,' has been fulfilled.

"God has brought us together in this country, to enable us to find the source of eternal salvation, which we knew not."

The Druses, in the midst of the deepest grief, returned to their homes. Often they visited the grave of Sedli, and celebrated her beloved memory.

The hand of time, which cures all things, could not soothe the profound affliction of Mehaled. Sarah, borne

down with sorrow and with years, did not long survive her daughter; and the Sheik soon followed his beloved wife.

The Hermit, dividing his days between his cell and the habitations of the Druses, continued their friend and guide, and employed all his cares to render them more and more acquainted with, and enamoured of the divine precepts of Jesus Christ.

The favour of the Czar, experienced by Mehaled, never suffered diminution. After the death of the Sheik, he permitted him to devote himself, without interruption, to the care of his family; which, thanks to his counsels, his prudence, and the wisdom of his government, long enjoyed every human happiness.

NOTES.



Note 1.—*Page* 14.

This is the oath which a Druse is required to take, in the assembly of the Okals, or Akals, when his religious attainments authorize his admission into the bosom of the faith:

"I am full of confidence in Hakem, our Sovereign Lord, God eternal and alone; who neither was begotten, nor has begot."

When he is admitted, a deed or obligation is prepared, in the following form, and presented to the initiate:

" I, *N. N.* son of *N. N.* being of perfect health, and free in body and mind, of my mere motion, and under no species of compulsion, attest and certify that I have adopted the religion of HAKEM, to whom all glory and worship is due; that I commit into His hands my soul, my body, my worldly goods, and all that I possess; that I submit myself in all things to His holy will, resigning myself with my entire will to all that it shall please Him to ordain for me, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. If I should be unhappy enough to forfeit these engagements, which I take with all my heart, and to forsake the worship of HAKEM, or to turn aside toward any other religion, I consent to be for ever deprived of His protection,

and to incur the most terrible punishments and sufferings. For he alone can hope for the felicities of the true believers, who believes firmly that HAKEM, our Sovereign Lord, is He who is the sole god in the heavens, and the sole priest upon earth; who is worthy of all worship."

"DONE and signed in the month of ——in the year—— of the coming of Hamzah the son of Ali the son of Ahmed, slave of our Sovereign Lord; of glorious memory, the director of the faithful, the exterminator of unbelievers and apostates, armed with the sword and with the almightiness of HAKEM, whose name be blessed for ever."*

* Eichorn, Repertory of Biblical Literature, vol. xii. Worbs, History of the Druses, p. 127. Venture. Memoirs on the Druses.

The religious system of the Druses consists rather in faith, than in works.* To deserve the joys of heaven, it is sufficient to be born a Druse, and to believe in Hakem, and in Hamzah his prophet. These are the things essential; but a good man adds to these the observance of seven commandments. The first is to adore God (Hakem), and to be resigned to His will; the second, to protect and defend the brethren; the third, to speak the truth; the fourth, to abstain from the flesh of swine; the fifth, to spend only what has been lawfully acquired; the sixth, to be unosten-

* This remark will appear to be distinctly contradicted by what follows; unless it be supposed to apply to the actual practice or understanding, and not to the theory or intention of the system.
TRANSLATOR.

tatious in clothing; and the seventh, to devote certain days in the year to pious meditation.

The Druses have two classes of holy writings; those of the Hakem, those of Hamzah.

The law is contained in the divers edicts published by the Hakem during his reign in Egypt. The first edict abolishes all public and private prayer, all public worship, and all festivals and sacrifices in honour of God. Self-communion and piety is all that it enjoins.

The second edict prohibits tithes, fifths, and all gifts or dues for the outward maintenance of religion; and substitutes charity to believers, and the duty of flying to their defence.

The third abolishes pilgrimages to Mecca, and all other pilgrimages.

The fourth suppresses all church-government.

The fifth prohibits wars against infidels, which Mohammed had commanded.

The books composed by Hamzah, as commentaries or expositions of the law of Hakem, are divided into chapters, written in a loose diffuse style, and desultory manner, and are often so obscure themselves, that it is difficult to fix their meaning.*

NOTE 2.—*Page* 14.

The symbolical explanation of the brazen calf is taught in the higher degrees of initiation. Perhaps, it is the sign of the veneration entertained

* Worb's Hist. of the Druses. Venture, Mem. on the Druses.

by this people for agriculture, and for the animals useful to mankind. Several passages in their Catechism* seem to contain allusions to it. If the true sense of this symbol were known, we might see for certain, what, as it is, we can only suspect, that the religion of the Druses is not, as it is thought by Gibbon, a tissue of absurd reveries, which teaches men to adore for a god, a crazy calif; but a doctrine founded on the ancient dogmas of the Persians and Hindoos. The secresy with which they veil this doctrine, and the preparations necessary for being admitted to an acquaintance with it, have so much resemblance to the initiation to the higher degrees of the ancient and

* See the Catechism which follows these notes.

modern mysteries, that it is to be wished historical researches could be made, to discover, whether, at the era of the Crusades, the practice of the Druses did not introduce some modern initiations in the west of Europe.

NOTE 3.—*Page* 40.

A little nation of Syria, which dwells to the east of the Druses, in a deep valley that separates their mountains from those of the country of Damascus. Volney, I. 469.—In the work of this writer may be found some extended details on the history of the Motoälis, and their wars with the Sheik Daher, pp. 372, 469. "They are in alliance with no nation, and entertain the same principles of reserve

toward strangers, as is found among the Hindoos. A stranger cannot lodge with them, nor drink out of the same vessel. I even thought them somewhat ferocious. Nevertheless, I never received ill-treatment in their villages. Christians live freely among them, and they dislike them less than they do the Turks.

NOTE 4.—*Page* 85.

Curds. A nation which inhabits Syria, the scattered tribes of which are spread into Lower Asia, and have acquired, for a century past, considerable extension. Volney, I. 369.—Travels from Constantinople to Bassora, by Sestini, vol. 1. p. 73, &c. p. 123, &c.

NOTE 5.—*Page* 85.

See Volney's Voyage en Syrie et en Egypt, I. 457.

NOTE 6.—*Page* 93.

Provinces of Persia. " Adjerbidjan is the Aderbajan of the Zend-Avesta, and the Atropatene of the ancients. These names signify ' the country of fire,' whether because the worship of fire had its origin there, or whether the allusion is to the volcanic eruptions to which the country is subject. It is a mountainous, bleak, and cold country, but intersected with valleys exceedingly fertile in fruits and vegetables. In this province is Tauris, a considerable city." Précis de la Géograph. Univ. de Malte-Brun, vol. iii. p. 243.

In the province of Ghilan, the numerous rivers and forests render the atmosphere heavy. Spring lasts several months. The woods and meadows are always enamelled with flowers. The soil is exceedingly fertile, and produces hemp, hops, and almost all sorts of fruits without culture, &c. Ibid, p. 248.

Note 7.—*Page* 93.

The present name of Georgia.

Note 8.—*Page* 93.

Cartuel, or Carthalinia, and Casheti, are two provinces of Georgia, concerning which there is an extended notice in the twelfth volume of the Annales des Voyages. They formerly composed an independant kingdom.

which at length fell under the Persian sceptre, and, in the year 1801, was incorporated with the Russian empire. Chardin has given numerous details concerning the Czar Heraclius, second son of Teimuras, as well as on the history of this latter prince, and his long wars with the Persians. Another Czar Heraclius, who came to the government in 1751, took, at first, the side of the Turks, in a war which the latter then sustained against the Russians; but, in 1783, he sought for the protection of Russia, and acknowledged himself a vassal of Catherine II. In 1789, he resigned his crown. His son, the Czar George, succeeded him. The Russians, at the time of the assassination of the Emperor Paul, had abandoned the Georgians to the at-

tacks of Ali Mohammed Khan, sovereign of Persia; and the Czar George, seeing his country exposed to devastation, was obliged to have recourse to the Russians, and ask their assistance. In consequence, he and his country submitted to the Russian domination.

NOTE 9.—*Page* 93.

The Araxus of the ancients.

NOTE 10.—*Page* 94.

Chardin gives a description of a similar feast, which took place in his time at Teflis. It was given by the Czar, on occasion of the marriage of his niece.

"The marriage feast," says Chardin, "was given on a terrace of the pa-

lace. The terrace was converted into a grand pavillion, supported by five columns of twenty-two feet in height, and five inches in diameter. The hangings were formed of gold and silver brocade, so skilfully and elegantly mixed, that by the light of the flambeaus, it appeared a cloth of flowers and moresques. In the midst of this species of hall, there was a large basin of water. This did not render the air cold, for the numbers who composed the company, and the profusion of lights, communicated so much warmth, that the heat began to be uncomfortable when I left it. The floor was covered with beautiful carpets, and the whole space illuminated with forty candelabras, of which the four nearest the prince were of gold,

and the rest of silver. These candelabras weigh, on an average, forty pounds each. The foot is about fifteen inches in diameter. The branch, of the height of a foot and a half, supports a nozzle which is filled with pure suet, which supports the flames of two wicks.

"The guests were ranged on the raised floors along the sides. The prince was on a floor raised higher than the others, at the upper end of the room, and over his head was a canopy, in the form of a dome. His son and his brothers were on his right, and the bishops on his left. The bridegroom was between them. The prince caused me to sit with the capuchins, immediately next to the bishops. More than a hundred persons were at the

feast. The band of music was at the bottom of the room.

"A little after we were seated, the bridegroom entered, led by the Catholicos. As soon as he had taken his place, the relatives of the prince approached, to compliment him, and make him presents. The greater part of the guests did the same, each according to his rank. This ceremony formed a sort of procession, which lasted half an hour. The presents consisted in gold and silver coin, and little heaps of silver. I was desirous to know the amount of the presents; but, as far as I could judge, it was a trifle, not exceeding two hundred crowns.

"Meantime, the supper was served in the following manner: first, nap-

kins were spread before all the guests, and in three places in the centre. The napkins were of the breadth of the raised floors. After this, they brought bread of three sorts; one as thin as paper, a second of a thickness of a finger, and a third sweetened with sugar. The meat was in covered bowls of silver, so large that none like them is made in Europe. The flat bowl and cover usually weigh fifty marks. Those who brought the bowls into the hall placed them on a napkin at the entrance; other officers placed them before the 'squire-carvers, who filled the deep plates which were carried to the guests; first to the princes, and then to the rest, according to their rank. The supper consisted of three courses, each of sixty of the largest flat bowls of silver. The first com-

prized all sorts of *pilo*, a preparation of rice with meat, which is made of several colours, and several flavours. The yellow is cooked with sugar, canella, and saffron ; the red with juice of pomegranates ; the white is the most simple, and the best. This pilo is excellent eating, very delicate, and very wholesome.

" The second course was of pastry, stews, and fricassees, sweet and acid, and similar ragouts. The third was of roast meat.

" All the three courses contained a mixture of fish, eggs, and vegetables, for the ecclesiastics. We were served with both *gras et maigre*.* As to

* The priests were served with food like the rest, and with food consistent with religious fasting, and left to use which they pleased. TR.

the rest, things were brought and carried away again with wonderful order and regularity. Every one did his business without speaking; and three Europeans at table make more noise than fifty of those who were in the hall at this feast.

"What, after this perfect order, was the most admirable, was the buffet. It was composed of about a hundred drinking-vessels, cups, goblets, and horns; sixty flaggons, and twelve jugs. The jugs were almost entirely of silver. The flaggons were of gold, polished or enamelled. The cups and goblets were some of polished gold, others of enamelled gold; others covered with precious stones, and others of silver. The horns were adorned like the richest of the goblets,

and were of various sizes. The most common were about eight inches in height, and two in diameter, very black, and highly polished. Some belonged to the rhinoceros, and beasts of chase, while the most common were those of the bull and the ram. The custom of using them for drinking, and of adorning them with precious stones and metals, is of the highest antiquity among the Orientals.

" I know not how long the entertainment lasted, for I did not wait till the conclusion. I only know that when we left it, at midnight, the roast meat, or third course, was not removed.

" They do not drink in the early part of the meal. It was not till the third course that they grew thirsty,

and then they drank in an astonishing manner. Healths were drank after this fashion:—They gave to the eight persons nearest the prince, four on his right, and four on his left, eight goblets, of the same size and fashion, filled with wine. The persons rose, and remained standing till they had drank. Those on the right, all together, drank first. Those on the left followed; and, then, all the eight sat down, and the same eight goblets were carried to the eight nearest to them, and thus with all the rest, till the health had gone round. This done, they began again, with eight goblets of a larger size. The custom of the country is, to drink the health of great men last, in the largest cups. All this is for the

purpose of intoxicating the guests, by obliging them, through respect and esteem, to drink till they are drunk.

"They drank in this manner for the last two hours that I was at the feast; and, as I afterward learned, till the next morning. The first did not hold more than an ordinary wine-glass; the last which I saw emptied held only three gills, but these were no more than of middle size. The Capuchins and I were exempted from drinking; and, in truth, had I been obliged to drink as much as my neighbours, I should have died on my seat; but the prince had so much consideration as to forbid the healths being required of us. There was wine, water, and

a golden goblet before us. Drink was given us only when we asked for it.

When the healths began, the instruments of music struck up, accompanied with voices. The concert greatly pleased the company; they appeared transported with it; but, on my part, I found nothing agreeable in it. It appeared to me, on the contrary, rude and inharmonious. The Prince, who diverted himself much, and who grew merry with his wine, sent orders to the Prefect to cause his spinnet to be brought. He and his companion were enraged at the whim of the Prince. My presence was the principal cause of their displeasure, because they feared that I should relate a disadvantageous story of the servile complaisance they had betrayed on the occasion, and

that a Prefect of Missions should so far debase himself, as to turn fidler for a Mohammedan prince, and in an assembly of infidels and heretics, clergy and laity, who might be called, in the state to which wine had now reduced them, a troop of drunkards. When the spinnet was brought, it was placed on a stand in the midst of the hall. The Prefect was obliged to play; and the prince having told him to sing and play together, he fell a singing the *Magnificat*, *Te Deum*, and *Tantum Ergo*; and, after these, some songs and fashionable airs, in Italian and Spanish, because the tunes of the hymns did not exhilirate the Prince. The spinnet was much out of tune; the Prefect played through spite; and, being pale and broken with age and

fatigue, it may be judged that the concert was a very poor diversion. The Prince however enjoyed it for two hours."

NOTE 11.—*Page* 96.

Fekredin, vulgarly called Facardin, who was born in the year 1584, was the bravest and most celebrated of the Druse princes. Before Ebn Mann, his father, took the reins of government, the Druses, partly from the effect of intestine dissentions, and partly through the intrigues of the Turks, were divided into two factions which were incessantly at strife; the faction of the Jamanis, or the red standard, which counted three emirs; and that of the Casi, or the white standard, or of the tribe of Mann, to

which belonged the grand-emir who resided at Dair el Camar. Ebn Mann, at the end of the wars which he maintained for several years, was poisoned. Setnesey, his wife, a beautiful, intelligent, and sensible woman, and who was also endowed with poetical talents, so gained upon the affections of the chiefs, that she was unanimously chosen to succeed her husband. Notwithstanding this strong proof of attachment, she caused her two sons, still of tender years, to be brought up in secret. The Jamanis, her enemies, persuaded that Ebn Mann had died without heirs, possessed themselves of several of her possessions. Setnesey, feeling herself yet too feeble to oppose these encroachments, remained a quiet spectator of them at

Dair el Camar. But her son, Fekredin, arrived at man's estate, discovered a brave and enterprizing character. He put himself at the head of those Druses who remained faithful to the house of Mann. Junes, his younger brother, served under his colours, and the most experienced warriors guided his undertaking. In the course of a few years, he recovered the ancient possessions of his father, and saw himself acknowledged head of all the country of the Druses, from Lebanon to the Jordan. He even acquired Palestine, and a part of Syria. See Mariti, Hist. de Fekkredin. Worbs, Hist. of the Druses (in German). Volney, vol. i. p. 433. La Terre Sainte, &c. par Eugène Roger, Paris, 1646, 4to.

NOTE 12.—*Page* 108.

The valley in which Zahlah is situated.

NOTE 13.—*Page* 131.

The Persian priesthood has three degrees: the Herbed, or servant of the temple; the Mobad Desturr, or doctor of the law; and the Desturram Desturr, the supreme chief of all the degrees, and of all classes. He receives a tenth of all their revenues. The Mobads are eligible to the command of towns, and may even carry arms; but they are prohibited from practising agriculture, or any art or trade. See the Zend Avesta.

NOTE 14.—*Page* 140.

Benares, called Cashi by the Hindoos, and esteemed a sacred city. It

is consecrated to Siva, or Mahadeva, who is worshipped under the symbol of the Lingam. A work in the Sanscrit language, entitled Cashi Kkanda, treats of the history and particularities of this famous place. The Hindoos resort in crowds in pilgrimage to Benares.

Beside the magnificent temple of the sun (Mahadeva), in which the Lingam is adored as the symbol of that luminary, there are in this city a celebrated observatory, and an academy where all the branches of human knowledge are taught. From very remote times, natural history and the higher order of sciences have been cultivated at Benares.

We see, in the travels of Chardin, and those of Father Paulinus de St. Barthélemy, that the Persians and

Indians are strongly inclined to the study of medicine, and are well acquainted with the preparation of herbs, and the cure of local disorders.

Father Grüner, in his Indicateur Littéraire Moderne, gives several notices of a chemical society which existed in Egypt from the highest antiquity, and which, at length, through the exertions of Ostanas, was united with a similar one in Persia. The united societies spread themselves through all countries, and, during the middle ages, found shelter in the monasteries. Feuille de Matin, 1808, No. 42, (in German.)

NOTE 15.—*Page* 147.

SHAH ALLUM. See Voyage du Pere Paulin. de St. Barthélemy.

NOTE 16.—*Page* 148.

See Turner's Embassy to Tibet, and several Memoirs in the Asiatic Researches.

Buddha, not the god of that name, but the reformer of his religion, who did not appear till long after, was born, not in Tibet, but in a more southern country, perhaps China; and, according to some traditions, in the Doab, between the Jumna and the Ganges. He is adored in China under the name of Fo. But his doctrine, says Turner, was early carried by his disciples into Tibet, and thence into Tartary, whence it spread itself into China and Japan. Though this religion, says Turner, differs in several of its dogmas, and in its exterior wor-

ship, from that of Brahma or Hindustan, it agrees with it, nevertheless, in a number of articles. The principal idol in the Tibetian temples is Mahamuni, called Buddha in Bengal. In each of the countries in which his religion prevails, he is worshipped under a peculiar name. Hence, he is variously called Shaka Godama, Somono Codam, Maha Muni, Shaktsha-Tuba, Sangal Muni, Shigi Muni, Shekia, and Fo. In Tibet, Hindustan, and throughout the greater part of southern Asia, there is a general concurrence of opinion, in the attribution of sanctity to the same places; such as Proag, Benares or Cashi, Durgeedin, Sangor, and Jaganat; and to the same rivers, as the Ganges, Indus, Buramputer, &c.

To learn the melancholy spirit of this absurd religion, which is nevertheless so widely spread, we may consult the excellent remarks of Herder, in his Ideas to assist toward a History of Man, third part, article TIBET. (A classical work in German literature, which deserves to be translated into the other languages of Europe.)

NOTE 17.—*Page* 153.

We owe some excellent documents concerning Nadir Shah to Abdul Kerim, a native of Cashmire, the physician and favourite of that prince. They are to be found in the account of his travels, translated by M. Langlès, Paris, 1797. They make a part of the Collection Portatif des Voyages by that author.

NOTE 18.—*Page* 154.

The ancient Bactria. Hanway, who published his travels about the middle of the eighteenth century, describes the modern state of the city of Balk, and the surrounding country.

See, also, the Account of Travels in the different Provinces of the Russian Empire, by Ritscoff, in German.

NOTE 19.—*Page* 157.

Those who are not inclined to read the Zend-Avesta itself, and the detailed commentaries of Anquetil Duperron and Kleuker on the religion of the Magi, will find all that is necessary for their information on the subject in an abridgment of the Zend-

Avesta, or the Law of Light of Oromazes, with Remarks and Elucidations by Kleuker, Riga, 1789 (in German).

As to the religion and cosmogony of the Hindus, the work of which the following is the title, must, of all others, be consulted: Upanishat (id est secretum tegendum) sive Theologia et Philosophia Indica, studio et Opera Anquetil Duperron. Argentorati, 2 vols. 4to.; as also, the Collection of Original Asiatic Writings, printed at Zurich in 1791 (in German), and seven original papers in the Asiatic Magazine (German); and further, the Exposition de la Cosmogonie des Brames et des Hindous, from the Latin work of Father Paulinus de St. Barthélemy, with thirty plates. Gotha, 1797. See also Malcolm's Persia, 1815.

NOTE 20.—*Page* 175.

For the cities of Yezd, Shiras, and the province of Irak in general, recourse may be had to the travels of Tavernier, Chardin, Otter, Pietro de la Valle, and especially to those of Franklin, entitled, Observations on a Tour from Bengal to Persia, in the years 1786, 1787. See Malcolm's Persia.

NOTE 21.—*Page* 177.

There are still great numbers of Parsees at Kerman, where they exercise without molestation the worship of Oromazes. The surrounding country consists chiefly in hills, naked mountains, and deserts.

NOTE 22.—*Page* 178.

The Travels of Chardin and Neibuhr contain valuable details of Tshel-Minar, or Persepolis. The following works, all of which are German, also present many curious and instructive particulars, concerning that ancient capital of the Persians :—1. Ideas on the Political and Commercial Relations of the Nations of Antiquity. Second Part. ASIA.—2. Persepolitan Letters, by Herder.

The labours of Dr. Munter, and Messrs. Grotesend and Lichtenstein, with a view to decyphering the cuneiform characters, authorize a hope that the enigmatical inscriptions of the old world may at last be explained, and that then we may become acquainted

with the appropriation of that ancient edifice the ruins of which remain.

NOTE 23.—*Page* 184.

The feast of the New Year, which begins with the day of Oromazes, in the month of Favardin, and lasts six days. A description of this festival may be seen in the Travels of Chardin.

The Persians have a great number of festivals, as well religious as civil; that is to say, days consecrated either to the mysteries and principal historical epochs of religion, or to the memory of important political revolutions. Nevertheless they keep and celebrate with solemnity only three religious festivals; that is, the day succeeding their Lent, which is like the Christian Easter; the sacrifice of Abra-

ham; and the martyrdom of the sons of Ali; and one civil festival, which is that of the new year. But it may be said, that keeping only one of this latter kind, they celebrate it with extraordinary care. It lasts three days, and, in some situations, as at Court, as many as eight; beginning at the moment when the sun enters the sign of the Ram. It is called Naürus Sultaine; that is, the royal or imperial new year, to distinguish it from the true new year, according to the present Persian calendar.

The Persians make Jemshid, by some called the fourth king of Persia, the founder of the festival of the new year; concerning which it is to be observed, that the ancient Persians observed with great solemnity the festi-

vals of the solstices and equinoxes, but particularly that of the vernal equinox, because it is the return of fine weather. The festival lasted eight days. On the first day, the king received the compliments of the multitude; the second he devoted to the learned, and particularly the astronomers; the third, to the priests; the fourth, to the magistrates; the fifth, to the great; the sixth, to his relations, and the two others to women and children. The festival continued to be observed in this manner till the Mohammedan invasion, which bringing with it a new religion, with a new epoch, in which the first day of the year does not fall on the vernal equinox, but on the first day of the lunary month, called Maharran, the

ancient custom of solemnizing the first day of the year fell off from year to year, and passed at length into neglect.

The government would not keep the solar new year, out of opposition to the people of the country, who, persisting in their old fire-worshipping religion, made a religious festival of the first day of the year, consecrating it to Saturday *(le consecrant au Samedi)*; which appeared idolatry to the Mohammedans, who abhor all sorts of rejoicings on that day; nor on the first day of the lunary year, because, in Persia, the ten first days of the month of Maharran, the first month of the Mohammedan year, are days of mourning, publicly consecrated to the memory of the martyr-

dom of the sons of Ali. Things remained thus till the year 475 of the Mohammedan epoch, when the king Jelaleddin coming to the crown on the day of the vernal equinox, the Persian astronomers took occasion to represent to him, that it was the act of Providence which had brought him to the government of the empire on the first day of the year, according to the ancient kalendar, in order to re-establish the custom of the country, followed from time immemorial, of celebrating the commencement of the year by a festival; that this festival could not be fixed on the first day of the Mohammedan year, because that was a day of mourning, and it would be inauspicious to begin the year with the commemoration of a martyrdom;

and hence it followed, that it ought to be fixed on the first day of the solar year, which always fell in spring, the most beautiful season of the year, and the renovation of all things; instead of which, the first day of the Mohammedan year fell successively in all seasons, on account of its following the moon. The astronomers added, that if the king re-established this festival of the new solar year, he would find this peculiarity in it, that according to an ancient custom of the Persians, in conformity with which they counted the years by the reign of their kings, the first day of the solar year would be that of the commencement of his reign. The prince approved of the proposition, and re-established the ancient festival of the new royal year,

which has been solemnized ever since with much pomp and rejoicing.

The festival is announced to the people by discharges of artillery and musquetry, in places where there are either, as in the capital, and the other great towns. The astrologers, in magnificent dresses, resort to the royal palace, or the residence of the governor of the place, an hour or two before the equinox, to observe the precise moment of its occurrence, which they do with an astrolabe, on some terrace or platform; and, at the instant they give the signal, the discharges are made, and instruments of music, as tambourins, horns, and trumpets, fill the surrounding air. Nothing but songs and sounds of merriment are heard among the great and rich throughout the

empire. At Ispahan, music is played in the front of the king's gate, accompanied by dances, fire-works, and dramatical exhibitions, as at a fair; and every one passes the eighth day in an intoxication of mirth. The Persians, among the other names which they give to this festival, call it the *feast of new clothes*, because none are so poor as not to put one new suit, and those who have the means, put on a fresh suit every day of the festival.

This is the time at which to see the Persian court; for it is more pompous and magnificent then than at any other; every one dressing himself to his utmost in all that he has of the most beautiful and richest. On each of the eight days, the public promenade is in different parts, outside of

the city, where the concourse of people is really grand. Every one sends presents to his friends; and, on the preceding eve, they send painted and gilded eggs. Of these decorated eggs, some cost a golden ducat a-piece. The king distributes some five hundred of these eggs in his seraglio, presented, in beautiful bowls, to the principal ladies. I have brought to Europe some eggs of this description. One of them is covered with gold, with four little figures or miniatures, very delicately wrought, on the sides. It is said, that the Persians, from the highest antiquity, have made presents of these eggs, as symbols of the beginning of the world. The quantity given away at this festival is beyond belief.

When the moment of the equinox is

past, the great repair to the king, to compliment him on the occasion; each wearing his *tajé* or royal cap on his head, covered with jewels, and equipped in the handsomest manner they are able. Each, also, carries his present, consisting in jewels or precious stones, clothes, perfumes, rarities, horses, or money, every one according to his employ and his means. The greater part give gold, excusing themselves by saying that they have been unable to meet with any worthy of entering into the wardrobe of His Majesty. They usually give from five hundred to four thousand ducats. The great men who hold employments in the provinces also send their compliments and presents. None are exempt, and all try to surpass others, and them-

selves, as to what they have done in preceding years; so that the king receives a great amount of wealth at this festival, part of which he afterward dispenses in the seraglio, in giving new year's gifts to all that multitude which compose it. The king entertains the great lords magnificently, on each day of the festival, from ten o'clock, till the hour when he retires into the seraglio; and the lords do the same thing at their own houses, where they pass the rest of the day in receiving, in their turn, the visits and presents of those who depend upon them. For, it is the invariable custom of the East, that the inferior should give to the superior, and the poor to the rich, from the peasant to the prince.

Religious people, if they can, pass all the first day of the festival in devo-

tion at their houses. They purify themselves at day-break, by bathing the whole body in water, and then put on very clean clothes, abstain from women, perform the ordinary and extraordinary prayers of the day, and read the Alcoran and other good books; all with the design of drawing down upon themselves a happy year.

Those of another description—worshippers of Mammon—pursue a different course. These make a display of their riches and the costly articles in their possession, and place themselves in the midst of them, passing the day in counting and admiring them, in amusing themselves, and in indulging in all sorts of pleasures, from the notion that this augurs a pleasant plentiful year.

To the above passage in Chardin,

may be added what is said by M. Langlès, in his notes, vol. ii. page 254: "On the evening preceding the Naüruz, a handsome young man, representing the new year, places himself at the door of the king's bed-chamber, which he enters without ceremony, as soon as the sun is risen. "Who art thou?" is immediately asked by the king. "Whence comest thou? where art thou going? what is thy name? why dost thou come to me? what dost thou bring?"

"I am the blessed, the happy!" replies the young man; "it is God who has sent me, and I bring with me the new year!" After this, he retires, to make way for another, who presents himself with a large silver dish in his hands, containing wheat, barley, and

fenugreek, peas, sessamum, and rice, (seven ears and nine grains of each species,) a piece of sugar, and two pieces of gold, newly coined, the whole of which he places as an offering at the feet of the king.

"The first minister approaches next, accompanied by the commander-in-chief, the high-treasurer, and the war-minister; after whom are admitted the nobles and the people, all according to the order of their rank.

"In a little time, a loaf, made of the grain which has been mentioned, is served up to the king, of which he eats a very small piece, and then distributes the rest among those who surround him, saying, "To-day is the new day of the new month of the new year of the new time, when it is proper to renew

all that time produces." After this, giving robes of honour to the great personages of his court, he next distributes among them the presents he has received."

NOTE 24.—*Page* 186.

Escander, Eskender, Rumi, and Ben Filippo (the son of Philip) Zul' Karnaïn, or the Two Horned, are the names which the Orientals give to Alexander the Great. See the Bibliothèque Orientale of Herbelot, article ESCANDER; the Coran, chap. 18. ver. 85. Abulfarag. Hist. Dynast. vi. p. 62, &c. of Pocock.

NOTE 25.—*Idem.*

The Darius of the Greeks.

NOTE 26.—*Page* 194.

The caravans sometimes travel three, and sometimes six, and even nine days, without meeting with a well, or even water enough to slake the thirst of their camels. See the Travels of Tavernier, tom. i, and Plaisted and Elliot's Letters on a Journey from Bassora to Aleppo, performed in the year 1750.

NOTE 27.—*Page* 195.

Neibuhr and Pietro de la Valle speak of the ruins of the ancient Babylon, which are still to be seen on both sides the Euphrates, near the villages of Hillah and Babil. See also the Travels of Sestini, page 236, and the Voyage d'Olivier, tom. ii. p. 436.

NOTE 29.—*Page* 195.

See the Ruins of Palmyra, by Wood. Ruins of Balbec, by the same. Voyage en Syrie et en Egypte, par Volney. Voyage Pittoresque en Syrie, &c. by Casas.

NOTE 30.—*Vol. II. Page* 8.

The following is the ceremony of the *Sag-did*, words which, in the Zend language, signify "the dog sees." At the moment when a dying person is supposed to expire, a dog is held before him, and a piece of bread is given him on his side, that the dog may direct his eyes toward him. See the Zen-Avesta, abridged by Kleuker, vol. iii, p. 180. (German.)

NOTE 31.—*Page* 30.

See Shaw's Travels in several Provinces of Barbary and the Levant, and Volney's Travels. For Senaar, Nubia, and Abyssinia, see Bruce's Travels in Nubia and Abyssinia. Norden's Travels. Ludolfi, Hist. Æthiopica. Histoire du Christianisme d'Ethiopie et Arménie, par La Croze. Literary History of the Oriental Languages, by Wahl (in German).

The Suppases, othewise called Iranians, Jesdians, Abadians, and Hushangites, with their tenets and religious ceremonies, are treated of in a work by Mohammed Fani, entitled, Dabistan, or the School of Manners, and known by Sir William Jones's Memoir on the Persians, inserted in the

second volume of the Asiatic Researches.

NOTE 32.—*Vol. II. Page* 15.

Volney, tom. i, p. 52, calls this wind the *Kamsin.* His description will be read with interest. See Sestini's Travels, p. 175, where it is called *Sem-Yeli.* This word is composed of the Arabic *sam*, poison, and Turkish *yel*, wind. The Arabs call it *semum*, poison; and *khamsin*, fifty, because it lasts fifty days. See the Account of Duvry Effendi, and the extract from the Travels of Petits de la Croix, page 103, M. Langlès' note. Olivier distinguishes the *khamsin*, which he calls *khramsi*, from the *samiel.* Travels in the Ottoman Empire, Egypt, and Persia, vol. iii, p. 136.

NOTE 33.—*Vol. II. Page* 25.

"Now therefore, fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, that is, beyond the Euphrates in Mesopotamia, and in Egypt: and serve ye the Lord." *Joshua*, xxiv. 14.

THE CATECHISM

OF THE

DRUSES.



Question. You are a Druse?

Answer. Yes, by the grace of our Almighty Master.

Q. Who is a Druse?

A. He who has transcribed the law, and adored his Creator.

Q. What has the Creator required of you?

A. Truth, and the observance of worship and the seven conditions.

Q. What are the difficult duties which your Lord has dispensed with, or abrogated, and how do you prove yourself a real Druse?

A. By abstaining from what is unlawful, and doing what is lawful.

Q. What is lawful, and what is unlawful?

A. The lawful belongs to the priesthood and to agriculture; and the unlawful to secular objects and to apostates.

Q. When and how did our Lord Almighty appear upon the earth?

A. In the four hundredth year of the Flight of Mohammed. He called himself of the race of Mohammed, in order to conceal his divinity.

Q. And why did he desire to conceal his divinity?

A. Because his worship was neglected, and his worshippers were few in number.

Q. When did he appear in the manifestation of his divinity?

A. In the year 408.

Q. How long did he remain thus?

A. During the whole of the year 408. After this, he disappeared in the year 409, because that was an unfortunate year. Again, he appeared in the beginning of the year 410, and remained all the year 411. Lastly, in the beginning of the year 412, he became invisible, and will never appear again till the Day of Judgment.

Q. What do you mean by the Day of Judgment?

A. It is the day when the Creator

will re-appear in the human form, and regenerate the universe by his power, and with the sword.

Q. When will that happen?

A. That is a thing unknown; but signs will announce it approach.

Q. What will be the signs?

A. The change of royal dynasties, and advantages gained by the Christians over the Mohammedans.

Q. In what month will this take place?

A. Either in the month of Djemaz, or in that of Radjab, according to the astronomers.

Q. How does God punish nations and kings?

A. He manifests himself by his power, and by the sword, and takes away their lives.

Q. And what happens to them after their death?

A. They are born again, at the command of the Almighty, who directs what he pleases.

Q. How will he treat them?

A. They will be divided into four classes; Christians, Jews, apostates, and true worshippers of God.

Q. And how will these classes be divided among themselves?

A. The Christians will give birth to the sects of Nessaïria, and Metoälli; from the Jews will spring the Turks. As to apostates, they are those who have forsaken the faith of our God.

Q. How will God treat the adorers of his unity?

A. He will give them empire, and

royalty, and power, and goods, and gold, and silver; and they shall remain in the world, and they shall be princes, and bashaws, and sultans.

Q. And the apostates?

A. Their punishment will be terrible. When they desire to eat or drink, their aliments will be bitter. They will be reduced to slavery, and forced to endure the hardest labour, in the service of the true worshippers of God. God will place upon their heads a bonnet of swine's-skin, a pike in height, and put into their ears a ring of black glass, which, in summer, shall burn them like fire, and, in winter, freeze them like ice. The Jews and Christians will suffer torments of the same kind, but much lighter in degree.

Q. How many times has Our Lord appeared in the human form?

A. Ten times, which are called *stations*; and the names which he has successively borne are these: El Ali, El Bar, Alia, El Maalla, El Kaïem, El Maas, El Aziz, Abazacaria, El Mansur and El Hakem.

Q. Where was the place of his first station, that of El Ali?

A. In a city of India, called Rshine-ma-Tshine.

Q. And that of El Bar?

A. In Persia, in the city of Ispahan, and for this reason the Persians say *Bar-rhada.* Ali appeared in Yemen, under the form of a camel-driver; El Kaïem appeared in a city of the kingdom of Tunis, called El Mahdia, whence he went to Cairo, where he

manifested his divinity, and afterward built the port called Rosetta. Abazacaria and El Mansur appeared at El Menaür, and El Mansur called himself Esmail.

Q. How many times has Hamzeh appeared, and how has he called himself at each appearance?

A. He has appeared seven times, in the course of ages from Adam to the prophet Samed. In the age of Adam, he called himself Chatt-nil, in that of Noah, Pythagoras; in that of David, Abraham; in that of Moses, Chaïb, in that of Jesus, he called himself the true Messiah, and also Lazarus; in that of Mohammed, Sabman el Fardi, and in that of Saïd, Sahehh.

Q. Tell me the etymology of the word Druse.

A. That word is derived from our obedience to the Hakem by the order of God, which Hakem is our master Mohammed, son of Ismaël, who manifested himself by himself to himself; and, when he was manifested, the Druses, following his orders, *entered* into his law, for which reason they are called Druses; for, the Arabic word *enderaz*, *daresane*, or *endaradj*, *iendaradj*, *daredjane*, is the same thing with *darhah*, *iedrhal*, *darhalane*, which signifies *to enter*. This name, therefore, implies, that the Druse has written the law, is penetrated with it, and has *entered* into obedience to the Hakem. This applies, if the word Druse is written Druze, with a *z*. If it is written with an *s*, then it may be derived from *daras*, *iedros*, "to study,"

and the name will signify one who has *studied* the books of Hamzeh, and worshipped the Almighty, as he is there commanded.

Q. What is the signification of that word *iarh*, which belongs to the oaths of women, and *ouah*, which belongs to those of men ?

A. Our design is no more than to suppress all oaths which contain the name of God. In reality, the word *iarh* implies, sometimes, *no*, and, sometimes, *yes*. The word *iarh*, therefore, is the same thing as *Ia arhi là! Ia arhi naàm!* That is, " Yes, brother !" " No, brother !" It is the same with the words *Aï-ouah, La-ouah.*

Q. What is our intention in adoring the Gospel ?

A. Understand, that we design, in this action, to exalt the name of him who is standing by the order of God, and this is Hamzeh; for it is he who has offered us the Gospel. Further, it is expedient, that in the eyes of every nation, we should appear to acknowledge its particular faith. Lastly, we adore the Gospel because that book is founded upon the divine wisdom, and contains evident traces of the true worship.

Q. Why do we reject every book but the Coran, when we are questioned upon that point?

A. Because it is necessary that we should not be known for what we are, seeing that we are placed in the midst of the followers of Islamism. Hence, it is indispensable that we should ac-

knowledge the book of Mohammed; and, in order that we may not play our part amiss, we have adopted all the Islamite ceremonies, and even that of prayers for the dead; and all this only exteriorly, in order to conceal ourselves.

Q. What do we say of the martyrs of whom the Christians boast so much the courage and numbers?

A. We say that Hamzeh does not acknowledge them, though they may be believed in and vouched for by all historians.

Q. But, if the Christians tell us that their faith rests upon no doubtful authority, and is supported by stronger and more immediate proofs than the word of Hamzeh, what do we reply, and how have we ascertained the infal-

libility of Hamzeh, that pillar of truth upon which rests our salvation?

A. By the testimony which he himself gives of himself, when he says, in the epistle on Command and Defence, "I am the first of the creatures of God; I am his road and bridge; I possess knowledge by his order; I am the tower of the builded house; I am the master of death and of the resurrection; I am he who shall sound the trumpet; I am the high-priest, the master of forgiveness, the teacher, the reverser of judgments; I am the king of the world, the destroyer of the two witnesses; I am the fire which devours."

Q. In what consists the true religion of the Druse priests?

A. In the counterpart of every

creed of other nations and tribes; and every thing, which is impious with them, we esteem; we, as he has said, in the epistle of Deceit and Simulation.

Q. But if a man should succeed in learning the mysteries of our holy worship, believe in them, and conform to them, would he be saved?

A. Never. The door is shut; the work is finished; the pen is worn out; and, after his death, his soul goes to join his original nation, and his first religion.

Q. When were all the other souls created?

A. They were created after the high-priest Hamzeh, son of Ali. After him, God created, out of the rays of his light, all the spirits which are enume-

rated, and of whom the number shall neither diminish nor increase till the end of time.

Q. Does our holy religion teach the salvation of women?

A. Doubtlessly it does; for Our Lord wrote a chapter on women, and they instantly obeyed him, as is related in the Epistle on the Law of Women, and also in the Epistle of the Daughters.

Q. What do we say of the other nations who assert that they worship the Lord, creator of heaven and earth?

A. If they should even say so, it would be a falsehood; and, if they adored him really, if they did not know that the Lord is Hakem, their adoration would be a sin.

Q. Who are the ancients that preached the wisdom of the Lord to those who established our faith?

A. They are three, and their names are Hamzeh, Esmaïl, and Beha-Eddine.

Q. Into how many parts do we divide knowledge?

A. Into five parts. Of these, two belong to religion, and two to nature. The fifth, which is more immense than any of the others, is not divided. It is the true science; the love of God.

Q. Into how many branches is each of these parts divisible?

A. Each of the parts has a multitude of subdivisions. Each of the four first divide themselves into two branches, which comprize, in uniting again, the body of natural sciences;

but, as to the fifth part, of which we have said that it is not divided, it is the true science, the knowledge of the religion of the Druses, which is the wisdom of the slave (or servant) of Our Lord, which slave is Hamzeh, son of Ali.

Q. How do we know that a man is a brother, an observer of the true worship, if we meet him in the road, or if he approaches us, and says that he is a Druse.

A. Thus: after the usual compliments, we say, "In thy country, do they sow the seeds of the myrobolan?" If he answers "Yes, they sow it in the hearts of true believers," then we question him on the faith; and, if he answers rightly, he is our countryman; if not, he is a foreigner.

Q. Who are the fathers of our religion?

A. The prophets of the Hakem; that is to say, Hamzeh, Esmaïl, Mohammed el Kaïem, Abu el Rheir, Beha-Eddine.

Q. Do ignorant Druses * attain salvation, or have they any employment † under Hakem, if they die in their state of ignorance?

A. There is no salvation for them, and they will be held in disgrace and

* The word *Druse* is here employed as the name of a people, which is its vulgar sense; and not, according to the previous explanation, as that of the *initiates* of religion among that people. TRANS.

† We have seen before, that those who make themselves acceptable to the Hakem are to be *employed* in various situations of honour and profit. TRANS.

in slavery by our Lord, through an eternity of eternities.

Q. How did the Nessaïrians separate themselves from the true believers, and leave their worship?

A. They suffered themselves to be drawn aside by the seductions of Nessaïri, who pretended to be the slave of Our Lord, and who acknowledged the divinity of Ali-ebn-Ali Taleb, the founder of their belief, and whose divinity, he said, had appeared in the twelve Imans of his house; then disappeared, after having shown itself in Mohammed el Kaïem, and went to hide itself in the heavens, with which it clothed itself as with a blue veil, and then went to lodge in the sun.

And according to their religion, when a Nessaïrian, purified by the course

of time, comes again into the world, clothed in the human figure, after his second purification, he returns to heaven, where he becomes a star anew, in the place which he formerly occupied: but, if he has committed a crime against the commandments of the Prince of Believers, the Lord mighty and wonderful for ever, he becomes a Jew, a Mohammedan, or a Christian; and he continues to pass, in this manner, from one state to another, till he becomes as pure as gold in the crucible, and then he returns to heaven, and again becomes a star.

According to the same faith, all those impious persons who shall have refused to worship Ali-ebn-Ali Taleb, shall become camels, mules, asses, dogs, lambs destined to the knife, and other

similar animals. But the time will not allow me to go into all the details of this system, and principally to describe all the different transmigrations of the human soul in the bodies of brutes. It is sufficient to add, that the Nessaïrians have a multitude of books in which all these things are related.

Q. Who is the centre of the circle?

A. Hamzeh, son of Ali.

Q. Who is the way to Paradise?

A. Hamzeh, the son of Ali, who is called the pillar of truth. He is the Iman of time; the teacher of the world; the predecessor of all creatures; the prophet of the element of the elements.

Q. Who is Dumassa?

A. He is Adam the first; he is Arhenurh; he is Hermes; he is Adres;

John; Esmaïl, son of Mohammed 'el Taïmi; and, in the age of Mohammed the son of Abdallah, he was called El Mocdad.

Q. Who is the Ancient, and who is the Eternal?

A. The Ancient is Hamzeh, and the Eternal is the soul, his sister.

Q. Who are the feet of wisdom?

A. The three preachers.

Q. Who are they?

A. John, Mark, and Matthew.

Q. How long have they preached?

A. Twenty-one years. Each has preached seven.

Q. What did they preach?

A. The coming of the true Messiah.

Q. Who is the envoy of power?

A. Mohammed-ebn-Wahab-el-Ke-

raïchi, who is at once the Word, and the third brother.

Q. How did our ancestors use to welcome the Hakem, when he entered their houses?

A. They said, in a low voice, "It is from thee, O our Master! that salvation cometh; and it returns to thee. Thy invitation is the house of salvation. Be blessed and exalted, O our Lord, glorious, and who possessest majesty and mercy!"

Q. Who is the treasurer?

A. Beha Eddine, who is called El Mektani, and also Ali, son of Mohammed el Semuki.

Q. Who are the five wise virgins?

A. They are the limits of the invitation of the world.

Q. Who are the five foolish virgins?

A. They are the limits of justice.

Q. Which are the letters of truth?

A. They are in number one hundred and sixty-four. They are the inviters, the pure and the resisting, and they are the prophets who belong to Our Lord the Hakem.

Q. Which are the letters of lies?

A. They are twenty-six; and they are signs of the devil, his children, and his wives; and these are Mohammed, Ali, and his twelve children, before whom the Metäollies offer adoration.

Q. Which are the limits unimaginable and incomprehensible, and which will not be explained till the coming of Hamzeh, the column of time.

A. They are the will, the deed,

and the word; that is to say, in the time of Messiah, John, Mark, and Matthew, who are likewise called El Mocdad, Medaün-ebn-Jaser, and Acar-el-Acan; in the time of Hamzeh, Esmaïl; Mohammed-el-Kelmah, and Ali-Beha-Eddine.

Q. Why is it said, in the Epistle of Rhamar-ebn-Djaïeh-el-Selimani, that he is the brother of God?

A. God showed himself to that man, and told him that he was the son of his (God's) father. Rhamar hearing this, believed it was so; but it was only a snare which God had laid for him, to deceive him the more easily, and take away his life.

Q. What is the meaning of God's mounting the asses without a saddle?

A. The ass mounted without a saddle is the emblem of the overthrow of ordinances; and the Coran says, in support of this, that the most disagreeable of voices is that of the ass: and by this is intended the succession of prophets.

Q. What is the meaning of the black wool in which God is said to be clothed?

A. This mournful clothing signifies the consternation into which the faithful were thrown, on the disappearance of Our Lord.

Q. What are those buildings in Egypt which are called pyramids?

A. The pyramids were built by the Almighty, to attain an end full of wisdom, which, in his providence, he had conceived.

Q. What is that end full of wisdom?

A. To deposit and preserve in the pyramids till the Day of Judgment which will be his Second Advent, the *hodgets* and quittances which his divine hand has taken from all his creatures.

Q. Why has God appeared a every new dispensation of his law?

A. To do honour to the followers of the true worship, to strengthen their faith, to make them know that it is He who changes ordinances according to his will, and that they should believe in none other than Him.

Q. How do souls return into bodies?

A. Whenever one man dies, another is born; and thus the world goes on.

Q. Who are the limits?

A. They are the five viziers.

Q. Who is the column of time?

A. Hamzeh, son of Ali.

Q. What are the Mohammedans called?

A. The descent (*el tanzil*).

Q. And the Christians?

A. The explanation (*el taaouil*). These two words signify, the last that the Christians have *explained* the word of the Gospel; the first, the noise spread abroad, that the Coran *descended* from heaven.

Q. What are priests who have committed adultery?

A. If they repent, they must spend seven years in penitence, and visit priests weeping; if they do not repent, they die heretics and apostates.

Q. How do we prove that our religion is the true one, and that all others are false?

A. These words tend to heresy, and to the destruction of the faith. True believers have sworn themselves by their souls, on the books of the law, that they place themselves in body and soul, temporally and spiritually, in the hands of the Hakem, without any kind of reservation. They are his slaves in the most absolute sense of the word, and the man who says otherwise, falls into apostacy and atheism. In short, the words which you have uttered are heretical, according as it is written in the Epistle of Content and Self-devotion to Hamzeh, the slave of the Lord our God; and what I tell you is certain truth.

Q. What did our Lord do before his disappearance?

A. He drew up a register, which he affixed upon the door of the house of prayer, and which, for this reason, is called the Affixed Register.

Q. What did God say to Mohammed, who called himself his son?

A. Though this was a falsehood, (for he was born in adultery, and was the son of a slave) yet God publicly declared that Mohammed was his son.

Q. But, what did Mohammed do, when the Hakem disappeared.

A. The impostor exhibited himself, seated on the throne, and said, " I am the son of the Hakem ; adore me, as you have adored my father." But Hamzeh answered him, saying, " Our Lord neither begets nor was

begotten."—"Whose son am I then," cried Mohammed?—"We know nothing of the matter," was replied by those present. "Then I am the son of adultery," said Mohammed? "It is thyself who hast said it," replied Hamzeh; "and thou hast borne testimony against thyself!"

Q. And who was this Mohammed, publicly called the son of the Hakem?

A. Mohammed the son of Abdallah.

Q. And why did God suffer so much blasphemy without destroying him?

A. It was the choice of his divine wisdom to put to exercise the patience of true believers, in order to double their reward. He also designed, that through this means, heretics, who give God companions on the throne of

heaven, should be strengthened in their belief, and not return from their sin.

Q. What may have been the design of God, in the genii and angels which are spoken of in the book of Wisdom of Hamzeh ?

A. Genii, sprits and demons are like those among mankind who have not hearkened to the voice of Our Lord the Hakem. As to the angels, it was requisite to have in heaven a representation of the true worshippers of God, who have hearkened to the voice of Hakem, who is the Lord worshipped through all the revolutions of ages.

Q. What are the revolutions of ages ?

A. They are the laws or judgments of the prophets, who have ap-

peared one after the other, and whom the generations with which they lived declared to be such; as Adam, Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, and Saïd. All these prophets are only one and the same soul, which has passed from one body into another; and that soul, which is the accursed guardian-angel of Ebn Termahh, is also Adam the disobedient, whom God drove out of his Paradise; that is to say, God deprived him of the knowledge of his divine unity.

Q. In what employment was the devil, when with Our Lord?

A. He was beloved by Our Lord; but he indulged in pride, and refused to obey the grand vizier Hamzeh; wherefore God cursed him, and cast him down from Paradise.

Q. Who are the archangels which carry the throne of God?

A. There are five principal ones, who are called as follows; Gabriel, who is Hamzeh; Michael, who is his second brother; Esrasil-Salamah-ebn-abd-el-Oähab; Esraïl-Beha-eddin; Matatrun-Ali-ebn-Achmet. These are the five viziers, who are called El Sabec (the first in precedence), El Cani (the second), El Djasad (the body), El Rathh (the offer), and Fhial (the cavalier).

Q. Who are the four wives?

A. Their names are Ismaël, Mohammed, Salamah, and Ali; and they are El Kelmah (the word), El Nafs (the soul), Beha-eddin (the beauty of religion), and Abu-el-Reheir (the father of good).

Q. Why are they called wives?

A. Because Hamzeh stands in the quality of husband, and they are his wives, fulfilling that station by their obedience.

Q. What is that Gospel which is in possession of the Christians, and what do we say of it?

A. The Gospel really came from the mouth of the Lord the Messiah, who, in the age of Mohammed, was Salman El-Farsi; which Messiah is Hamzeh, son of Ali. The false Messiah is he who was born of Mary; for he is the son of Joseph.

Q. Where was the true Messiah, when the false one was with his disciples?

A. He was among the latter. He professed the religion of the Gospel,

and gave his instructions to the Messiah the son of Joseph, and said, "Do this, and that," conformably to the Christian religion; and the son of Joseph obeyed him. Meantime, the Jews conceived a hatred against the false Messiah, and crucified him.

Q. What happened after he was crucified?

A. He was laid in a tomb. The true Messiah came, stole the body from the tomb, and buried it in a garden. Hence a rumour was spread abroad, that the Messiah had returned to life.

Q. Why did the true Messiah act in this manner?

A. To make the Christian religion last, and give it more strength.

Q. Why did he thus favour heresy?

A. To the end that the Druses might cover themselves with the Christian religion, as with a veil, and none might know them to be Druses.

Q. Who is he that left the tomb, and entered amid the disciples, while the doors were closed?

A. The living Messiah, who never dies; Hamzeh, the slave of Our Lord God Almighty.

Q. Who preached the Gospel?

A. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; who are the four wives already mentioned.

Q Why have not the Christians become Druses?

A. Because God will not have it so.

Q. But why does God suffer evil and heresy?

A. Because it is his constant usage

to deceive some and enlighten others; as it is said in the Coran, "He gives wisdom to some, and denies it to others."

Q. If heresy and error come from God, why does he punish them?

A. Because, when he called men, they did not come.

Q. What obedience is rendered by those who are misled, when they doubt; as it is said, in the Coran, "We have placed them in uncertainty, and have told them lies?"

A. That is not to be asked. We are to reverence, without limitation or exception, what the Lord judges proper to do with his slaves; for it is said, "My creatures owe me an account of what they do; but I owe no account to them of what I do."

Q. What is the meaning of the dance of unmarried persons, and the game of chastisement, before Our Lord the Hakem?

A. All these things belong to a profound wisdom, which will be made manifest in due time.

Q. What is this profound wisdom?

A. The dance signifies that the prophets and their laws have only appeared, each in his time, and passed away.

Q. What is the meaning of the game of chastisement?

A. The rod inflicts a short-lived pain, but does not kill; hence, it signifies the knowledge which does neither good nor harm.

Q. And why has Hamzeh the son

of Ali ordered us to conceal wisdom, and not to discover it?

A. Because it contains the secrets and quittances of Our Lord; and it is not proper to discover to any one the things in which the salvation of souls and the life of spirits are contained.

Q. Then, we are selfish, and do not desire that every one should be saved?

A. There is no selfishness in this, for the invitation is withdrawn: the door is shut; he is a heretic who is a heretic, and a believer who is a believer; and every thing is as it ought to be.

The observation of Lent, which was formerly ordained, is now abolished; but when a man keeps Lent out of the time prescribed, and mortifies himself by fasting, he is praise-worthy; for

these things bring us nearer to the Divinity.

Q. Why has alms-giving been suppressed?

A. With us, alms-giving to our brethren the Druses is lawful; but it is a crime to all others, and must not be practised.

Q. What end do the ascetics, who live amid mortifications, propose to themselves?

A. To merit, when the Hakem shall come, each according to his works, vizierships, pashalics, and governments.

HISTORICAL

AND

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTICE

OF

THE DRUSES,

AND THE COUNTRY THEY INHABIT.



The Druses, a warlike and ancient people, have inhabited, since the eleventh century, the heights of Mount Lebanon, and are spread toward the environs of Saïd, Balbec, Dshebal,

Tripoli, Acca, the banks of the Jordan, and even into Egypt.

Faithful to the simple manners which they inherit from their ancestors, the Druses constantly avoid, in spite of their hospitable disposition, all familiarity with men of another faith, and especially with the Turks. To these latter they pay tribute, but cautiously conceal from them their religious tenets. Hakem, the founder of the Druses, in fixing their abode in the valleys of Lebanon, took a step exceedingly favourable to their security and independance; for, though they are at this day subjects of the Porte, they enjoy, notwithstanding, a large share of liberty.

From the want of authentic documents, the earlier periods of their his-

tory are enveloped in obscurity. It is only at an epoch comparatively recent, that we find them at war with the Crusaders, the Califs, the Mamelucs, and the Seljucides. They are often spoken of under the general term of *heretics*, and sometimes they are confounded with the sect of Carmatias, who became celebrated in the second and third centuries of the Hegira.* At a subsequent period, they were a prey to domestic dissensions; for, in 1574, Rauwelf, a German traveller, found them divided into two factions, which, from the colours of their standards, were severally called

* Deguignes, Histoire des Huns, tom. 4. Annales des Voyages, tom. xii. p. 330. M. Sylvestre de Sacy, author of a Memoir there cited, thinks that the Wahabees are possibly the successors of the Carmatias.

the White Flag and the Red Flag; and this rupture is not yet closed.

Their original country, according to some writers, is to be sought for in Corasan, a province of Persia. A religious enthusiast, called Hakem,* secretary to Abu Moslem, governor of Corasan, was their founder. He commenced by delivering prophecies to the people, by aid of which he established his tenets, a medley of those of Zoroaster and of the Indian metempsychosis, which he pretended to have been communicated to him by God himself, who descended from heaven to commune with him. Every evening, he caused apparitions, in the

* Hakem, or Hakim, is a Persian word, signifying a lord, ruler, governor, or master. The founder of the Druses was acknowledged by them as their *hakim*, or temporal king. TRANS.

form of a moon, to arise out of a well; on which account he was called Sagen Damah, or Maker of Moons. He found numerous partizans among the Mohammedans, Persians, and Jews, and grew more powerful daily. The Calif Modhi, of the dynasty of the Abassides, was not long in discerning that the principal end of this impostor was to effect a revolution in the state, and therefore sent an army against him, by which he was surrounded and vanquished in the fortress of Mawara-nahar, where he had sheltered himself. Hakem and his immediate associates perished by poison, and his adherents dispersed themselves, and long lived obscurely in detached bodies.

Two hundred and forty-six years after the death of Hakem, that is, in

the year 408 of the Hegira, or 1017 of the Christian era, Ebn Ismaël, called El Drusi, went from Persia into Egypt, and entered into the service of the Calif of that country. This man also called himself Hakem ;* gained the good graces of the Calif, and persuaded him that he was God, or, rather, that God had become incarnate in him. The Calif, who, as a good Mohammedan, ought to have punished this new visionary, loaded him with praises and gifts ; but the people, taking the opposite side, and becoming enraged, attempted the life of the prophet, and he was killed by the hand of a Turk, in the presence of the Calif. The murderer was led to punishment ; but the people rose, pillaged the house

* Rather, "was also called the Hakim." See the preceding note. TRANS.

of El Drusi, and massacred several of his followers.

A little time after this, Hamzeh, another Persian, began to be known in the neighbourhood of Cairo, where he preached the doctrines of El Drusi, and, like the others, obtained the title of Hakem. His followers soon became so numerous, that the Calif having asked him how many followers he had, he answered, "sixteen thousand persons adore thee as God." These words induced the Calif to discontinue the prayers and public discourses in the mosque, which were the duties of his station. The opinion that he was God took such hold upon his mind, that according to the testimonies of the Syrian and Egyptian chronicles, he became completely mad,

and his follies and cruelties occasioned the loss of his life in a public tumult. Though little dependance is to be placed upon these chronicles, it is certain that the Calif favoured the doctrine of Hamzeh to the prejudice of Mohammedans; but that through fear its followers should perish under the sword of the latter, he pointed out to them Mount Lebanon as an asylum. This happened toward the year 1020, of the Christian era.

If, to these details of the Druses in general, it is wished to add others on their founder Hakem, or Abu-Ali Manur Hakem Beamnilla, they may be found in the works mentioned in the note below.*

* Histoire des Dynasties, par Abulpharage, traduite de l'Arabe, Leipsic, 1783.

According to all the documents we possess, concerning this people, it ap-

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The Arabic Biography of Ebn Chalecan, collected in the Archives of Oriental Literature of Lorsbach, Marburg. 1791. Vol. 1, page 39, (German).

Travels in Arabia, by Neibuhr, vol. 2, page 445 ; and, above all, the History and Religion of the Druses, by Worbs, Goerlitz, 1799, (German), contains the fullest information concerning the religion of this people.

New Essays to illustrate the history of the Druses, drawn from the Arabian Manuscripts of the Royal Library at Copenhagen, by Adler.

Two Druse Catechisms, one from the original in the library at Goëkingen, and the other from the Borgian Museum ; published by Eichorn, in his Repertory of the Literary History of the East, and of the Bible.

Bibliothéque Orientale, par Herbelot.

Voyage en Syrie et en Egypte, per Volney, tome 1, page 427.

There appeared in the 69th number of the Paris Moniteur, in the year 1808, a notice on the Druses, almost wholly extracted from Volney, but much less complete than the work of Worbs,

pears that their religion is a mixture of diverse ancient systems; and, that like several others, it contains many good and useful things, in conjunction with opinions the most absurd. In reading what contemporary writers relate of Hakem and Hamzeh, it is difficult to conceive how these founders of the religion of the Druses obtained so many followers among the people of their time. But what cannot novelty and the marvellous effect upon the multitude, especially in countries like

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and than the documents supplied by Pagès, in his Voyage autour du Monde, tome 1, page 342. The Catechism joined to that notice, agrees, except in a small number of articles, with those cited above. It has been given in the preceding pages. See page 125, &c.

See, also, Memoires sur les Druses, par Venture, inserted in the fourth volume of the Annales des Voyages, page 368.

those in which this doctrine had its birth? Like the disciples of Mohammed, those of Hakem may, at first, have been but a small number. They were probably a horde of vagabonds, who, in the end, became a powerful people.

Pagès, in his Voyage autour du Monde, gives a full account of the Druses, from which I shall present an extract, containing an interesting picture of the present state of the Durses:—

" I was every where exceedingly well received. The inhabitants of these mountains present an aspect of noble simplicity. Nature has placed them in shelter from the Turkish vexations, and given them perfect freedom. They pay with punctuality their tribute or taxes to their different Sheiks, who

pay in their turn to the Emir, who is himself tributary to the Grand Seignior. They are a laborious race, who cultivate the ground with care, and keep beautiful flocks. Though they live much alone, they are very hospitable. Several among them are Christians;* and, among the rest, the Sheiks to whom I was recommended, and to whom belong all the Kesroan. These are upon harmonious terms with each other, lead a life frugal, but dignified and free from want, and might be taken for rich peasants, rather than for lords. I was admitted to their meetings, which they hold under trees.

* The *Druses* are not *Christians.* There is wanting therefore, a name for the people of Mount Lebanon, whose emir or prince is tributary to the porte, and of whom a great proportion are Druses by religion. TRANS.

They took me regularly with them to divine service, and an assembly in the evening, where all the young persons were collected. At that assembly, after some amusing conversation, there was a pious lecture and prayers.

"When the inhabitants of this country go out of their own villages, they are armed from head to foot. In their communities, injury never escapes punishment. Hence we see in their countenances a boldness, which, without amounting to effrontery, marks a determination of character, though good and affable. They are compassionate and hospitable; and I think them intelligent and quick-witted, and of a jocular and perhaps ironical turn of mind.

"The priests are poor, and work

with their own hands for the maintenance of their families; for, though Catholics, but not according to the Roman ritual, they can be ordained after marriage, if contracted with a virgin. Few among them are bachelors; a circumstance very agreeable to their parishioners! Divine service is performed in the Syriac language; but the Gospel and Mass are read in a loud voice by the priest, in the Arabic language. The priests are generally ignorant on theological questions, and study only the scriptures and their catechism; but they are sincere, and of good morals; and more knowledge would excite among them disputes, abate the extreme submission to the Roman church in which they now live.

"The Roman Catholic religion is much spread in this country, as well as in the rest of Syria. The bishops and convents of both sexes are in great number. The whole population is religiously disposed; and, though vice is common to all countries, yet less will be found in these mountains, than on the plain.*

"At Masras, I alighted at the house of a parish-priest. He was absent; but his wife gave me a good reception, and begged me to rest myself, and wait for her husband. When he arrived, he endeavoured to make his reception surpass that given me by his wife, who, according to the Asiatic custom, did not again come

* This is equally true of all mountains, and of all plains. TRANS.

into my presence. At night, the hour of prayer brought together several of the neighbours, and divine worship was performed with all the devotion which could be inspired by the most magnificent temple. At day-break, we went to hear mass performed by this good priest."

"Dair el Kahmar * is the ordinary residence of the Emir, when he is not at Bairut. All the Sheiks are not in equal subjection to the Emir. His politics consist in sowing divisions among them, and at the same time holding the balance between them, so that they cannot unite against him.

"The Sheiks settle the differences which occur in their respective villages. If the parties are not satisfied

* The House of the Moon.

with his decision, the affair is carried to the Emir, in the last resort. Every one usually does justice for himself. Nobody goes out of doors without being armed with his dagger or long curved knife, nor to any distance from his village without carrying a musket and pistols.

"As the practice is to marry a girl to one of her relations, the union of families is so intimate, that if one individual is offended, all his relations, who, usually, are very numerous, take part in the quarrel. The wars which the Sheiks have among themselves are not so bloody. The two parties meet, and the Sheiks and principal peasants make their complaints; when the strongest party, after a warm conversation, in which even the private soldier

makes his speech, commonly punish the enemy by cutting down the mulberry-trees which belong to him, and afterward return peaceably to their homes.

"In the degree that their domestic strifes are mild, their foreign wars are furious and terrible. These people are generally feared ; and one of their mountaineers will go alone and with perfect coolness to assassinate an enemy, in the midst of a city, or of his troops, if he is so ordered by the Emir. One of them in this manner killed the Aga of the custom-house of Saïd, in the presence of many persons ; while a Maronite, one of his friends, with sabre and pistol in his hands, prevented the gate of the city from being shut, to cut off his retreat !

" Beside the Christian Druses, there are others who follow the native religion, and some who have peculiar religious customs, and are called Aquels (spirituals) ; these Aquels profess a religion, the particulars of which are not known. The common Druses cannot be admitted among the number of spirituals, a quality to which they are not entitled by birth, except with the addition of leading an incorrupt, irreproachable, pious, and penitent life. These Spirituals are clothed only in black, or stripes of black and white, and their turbans are white and plain. They do not take up arms but when the extremity of a war obliges all the Sheiks to go into the field. They eat only at the houses of persons whose integrity is univer-

sally distinguished, and accept presents from none but such, fearing to participate in wealth unjustly acquired. They often read the Pentateuch of Moses, which they call, in Arabic, Taura; and other books with which I am unacquainted. They meet at prayer in buildings devoted to that purpose, the interiors of which I have never seen, nor learned any description of, because they place centinels at half a league on every side on their days of prayer. The houses in which the more devout among them shut themselves up for prayer, for several weeks together, are called *Caloué*, and are situated on the tops of the most rugged mountains, in the neighbourhood of their villages. I have been assured that the more austere receive at con-

fession those whom repentance of their faults leads to that communication. They mortify themselves by fasting, and by abstinence from pleasures. There was among them a Spiritual who lived only on bread and water. They visit our churches with a respectful and modest demeanour, and reverential awe, which are reproaches to the Christians; though these observe a decorum unknown in Europe. In short, several of the most worthy among these Spirituals listen with pleasure to the truths of our religion, clearly explained; but without entering into any of the communions of the church known in these countries.

"The common people have no form of divine worship; at least,

none that is known. Nevertheless, many among them pray to God, and fear him; but their exterior is more rude than that of either the Aquels on one side, or the Christians on the other. They stand much upon their courage, and I have known several brave men among them; but their mere exterior, and my prejudices, prepossessd me against the real goodness of their hearts.

"All these inhabitants of the mountains are indisposed toward the Turks, whose religious principles and prejudices equally indispose them toward the Druses; and hence the latter owe to their valour and the ruggedness of their mountains alone, the sort of independence of the government of the Porte which they retain. The Druses

are friendly to the Christians, and do not absolutely hate the French, from whom they are said to be descended, through the persons of some fugitives who found an asylum in the mountains, at the time of the expulsion of the Crusaders.* In some of them are recognized the remains of the principal subjects of the Old Man of the Mountain.

"I had visited several climates of the universe, and I had found none more delightful than that of the southern

* This erroneous opinion is maintained in a work published in the year 1762, under the title of a History of the Druses, a people of Mount Lebanon, decended from a French colony, &c. by M. Puget de Saint-Pierre.

Venture and Volney have exposed the absurdity of this opinion, which, however, is found in all the old accounts of travels in Syria and Palestine.

part of Syria. The productions of the soil of that country is an incontestable proof of what I advance. Many species of corn spring and come to seed during the winter. Some of the trees, indeed, are without leaves at that season; but the gardens are full of flowers, and of kitchen-vegetables newly sown, and of which there is a succession of crops from the month of November till the summer. I have eaten green beans in the month of November. The situation of the country is also favourable to the excellence of its climate. It is sheltered from the north winds by high mountains, and is bordered on one side by the sea, and on the other by the desert, the soil of which, being dry, stony, and sandy, produces few exhalations, and

consequently little rain. Syria equally abounds in the products of hot and cold countries.*

"The industry of the inhabitants has fertilized the surface of the mountains, and covered it with a delightful garden. Numerous springs, ingeniously conducted, water the mulberry-trees which form the principal staple of this territory. Oil and wine and figs are also considerable articles of product.

"These people are exceedingly attached to their customs, and we may observe among them those which are spoken of in the Scriptures. The manners of Abraham and his family are to be trace. among the Bedweens.

* See Voyage d'Olivier dans l'Empire Ottomaen, &c. tom. ii. page 271, &c.

The Sheiks are the images of the Patriarchs, or heads of families. The flocks of the desert, and of the Arabs of the towns are conducted and gathered in the night, like those of Laban and the Jews. The style of the Scriptures is that of the Arabic language; a resemblance which is preserved only by the continuance of the same manners.

"Their villages are always placed in agreeable situations, and near a spring of water. The Emirs and Shieks have commodious houses, several stories high. The houses of the common people are vast single chambers, with raised floors, the roofs of which are supported by pillars of wood. The Druses are very neat in the interior of their households;

though their furniture consists only in a basket, some mattresses, and a few cushions."

There subsists, says M. Venture, among the Druses, a point of barbarous honour, which perpetuates among them the practice of assassination, and which the authority of the Emirs has never been able to suppress. When, in a private quarrel, a Druse happens to be killed, it belongs to his son, his nephew, or his other nearest relation to take upon him the task of vengeance, and to destroy the murderer, or some one of his family. But, when two hostile families meet, and are ready to come to blows, if a woman enters the field of battle, that moment the assault is abandoned, and vengeance is deferred till another opportunity.

There is no example in which the rancour of the two parties has not yielded to the respect which they pay to the presence of a woman.

The Druses have another Arabian point of honour; that of hospitality. Whoever presents himself at their door, with the title of a beggar or a traveller, is sure of receiving lodging and nourishment in a manner the most liberal and unaffected. When they have contracted with their guests the sacred engagements of bread and salt, nothing can afterward induce them to violate it.*

Their ceremonies of marriage are very simple. The young man who is desirous of having a particular young woman for his wife, goes to the rela-

* Volney, tome i. p. 462.

tions of the girl, and states the sum he will give in case of putting her away. When the parties are agreed upon this point, and the contract is signed, the marriage is complete, without any other ceremony. Divorce is equally inartificial. When a wife asks her husband's permission to visit her relations, if he says, "Go," without adding, "and come back," the divorce is effected. As to the rest, the Druses are exceedingly jealous of their wives. It is sufficient to speak of a woman in the presence of her husband, to make the latter believe that he has a right to kill the indiscreet speaker. Their notions of chastity are so severe, that a young female cannot lift her eyes upon a man without bringing herself into disrepute. The brother does not look at

his sister-in-law, nor the father-in-law on his daughter. Though polygamy is allowed, the Druses have usually but one wife; but this is less through moderation, than through the fear of increasing their family, and too much dispersing their property.

The women are large, strong, and very fat, and share in all the toils of the men. After the death of the husband, the widow places herself at the head of the house, of which the government belongs to her, to the exclusion of the sons. The same custom prevails among the Sheiks and Emirs.

The dress of the Druses consist in a short tunic, which does not descend so low as the knees. It is usually made of woollen cloth, of a dark green colour, with white stripes, or stripes of another

colour, and often bordered with gold and silver. All the stripes meet at top, in a sort of capuchin. The sleeves of the tunic are not open. They wear beneath a second tunic, made of cotton, which is a little longer, and of which the sleeves cover the arm to the wrist. In fine, beneath this garment, they wear a white shirt, which descends a little lower than the former, reaching to the calf of the leg. To this they add cotton drawers, closer than those of the Turks, and which descend to the ancle. On the outside of the costume, they fasten a woollen girdle, generally yellow, but sometimes red, or of another colour. They make no use of stockings; but the form of their shoes is like that of our own. They

are made of red morrocco, and ornamented with blue ribbons, the floating ends of which cover the whole foot. They usually carry two pistols in their girdle, fixing them next the body with a little band of leather, to which is fastened a pouch containing twenty-four cartouches. To the little band, in front, they fasten a knife, the blade of which is very broad, and a foot in length; and behind, an axe, in the form of a crescent, and a powder-horn of wood; at the side, floats a white handkerchief. They do not go abroad without a musket on the shoulder. Their sabre hangs to a belt. Their heads are covered with a red cap, the bottom of which may be raised or put down at pleasure. The cap

is surrounded with bands of green wool.

The female costume very much resembles that of the Turkish women; but it is distinguished by a peculiar head-dress. This consists in a sort of helmet of silver, of a pyramidical form, to the top of which is fastened a veil, which is suffered to float behind, and with which the wearer covers herself only when she goes abroad.

At the death of a Druse, the body, clothed in its vestments and arms, is deposited under a tent. If it is that of an initiate, a book is put into the hand. The women surround the body, and bathe it with tears. The men remain at a certain distance in silence. A moment after, the relations and

friends of the deceased are summoned with loud cries. When the latter are seen approaching, the family go out to meet them, with the body, which they carry for some distance round the village, expressing their sorrow by loud cries and groans, and making violent gestures with their handkerchiefs. The body is afterward again placed under a tent. The next day, all the Druses of the neighbourhood appear on horseback, to remove the body and inter it. During the burial, an initiate recites prayers. The women accompany the removal of the body with cries and gestures, as if to oppose it. During the seven days of mourning, they carry in procession, through the neighbouring villages a

bundle of straw, or a figure of wood, clothed in the garments of the deceased.

The language of the Druses is the purest Arabic.

The surface of the country of the Druses contains an hundred and ten square leagues, and the population is about an hundred and twenty thousand souls; which gives, for each square league, a thousand and ninety souls, a number which makes the proportion of population equal to that of the most flourishing provinces of Europe. To understand how large the proportion is, it is to be observed, that the surface is broken, that there still remains many uncultivated heights, and that the soil is not very fertile. This abundance of men, therefore, within so small a space,

can only be attributed to the ray of liberty which shines upon them. They can bring into the field forty-thousand fighting men.*

M. Sylvestre de Sacy, in his Chrestomathie Arabe, tome ii. page 334, gives an extract from the sacred books of the Druses. M. Malte-Brun, in the Supplement to the third volume of his Précis de la Géographie, and in a note on the Memoire, by M. Venture, informs us, that this learned Orientalist is engaged on a complete history of the Druses; and adds, with good reason, that the work will contain more ample information on the subject than any which can be met with at present.

M. Malte-Brun shares in the opi-

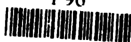
* Volney, tome i. p. 459, &c.

nion of many scholars, who regard the Druses as an indigenous tribe of the mountains of Syria, and think that they are mentioned in several ancient authors, and even in the books of the Hebrews.*

* Annales des Voyages, tome iv. p. 371.

THE END.

Printed by J. Dennett, Leather Lane, London.


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